



EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY & AUDIT PANEL

THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2013 AT 10.00 hours

MEMBERS

East Sussex County Council

Councillors Buchanan, Galley, Lambert, Taylor and Wincott.

Brighton and Hove City Council

Councillors Carden, Rufus (Chair) and Theobald.

You are requested to attend this meeting to be held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, at 10:00 hours.

AGENDA

852. In relation to matters on the agenda, seek declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests under Section 30 of the Localism Act 2011.
853. Apologies for absence.
854. Notification of items which the Chair considers urgent and proposes to take at the end of the agenda / Chair's business items.

(Any Members wishing to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgently).
855. To consider any public questions and petitions.
856. Non-confidential Minutes of the last Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting held on 11 July 2013 (copy attached).
857. Callover.

The Chair will call the item numbers of the remaining items on the open agenda. Each item which is called by any Member shall be reserved for debate. The Chair will then ask the Panel to adopt, without debate, the recommendations and

resolutions contained in the relevant reports for those items which have not been called.

- 858. External Auditor's Results Report (ISA 260) and Statement of Accounts 2012/13 – report of the Treasurer (copy attached).
- 859. Statement of Operational Assurance – report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive (copy attached).
- 860. Review of Fatal Fires in 2012/13 – report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive (copy attached).
- 861. 2012/13 Review of progress with Partnerships – report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive (copy attached).
- 862. 2013/14 1st Quarter performance results – report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive (copy attached).
- 863. Key Task Areas and Corporate Projects 2013/14 – 1st Quarter Outturn Results – report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive (copy attached).
- 864. Customer Service Excellence Standard – report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive (copy attached).
- 865. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider whether, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information. NOTE: Any item appearing in the confidential part of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is confidential and therefore not available to the public. A list and description of the exempt categories are available for public inspection at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, and at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

- 866. Confidential Minutes of the last Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting held on 11 July 2013 (copy attached). (Exempt categories under paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of the Local Government Act 1972).

ABRAHAM GHEBRE-GHIORGHIS
Monitoring Officer
East Sussex Fire Authority
c/o Brighton & Hove City Council

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the SCRUTINY & AUDIT PANEL held at East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, 20 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, at 10:00 hours on Thursday 11 July 2013.

Members Present: Councillors Buchanan, Carden, Lambert, Rufus (Chair), Taylor, Theobald and Wincott.

Also present:

Mr. D. Prichard (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive), Mr. G. Walsh (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Mrs. C. Rolph (Assistant Chief Officer), Ms. L. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Mr. D. Savage (Treasurer), Ms. V. Chart (Head of Human Resources), Mr. P. King and Mrs. R. Coates (Ernst & Young Auditors), Nigel Chilcott (Senior Audit Manager, ESCC) and Mrs. A. Bryen (Clerk).

833. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

833.1 It was noted that, in relation to matters on the agenda, no participating Member had any disclosable pecuniary interest under Section 30 of the Localism Act 2011.

834. ELECTION OF CHAIR

834.1 **RESOLVED** – That Councillor Rufus be appointed Chair of the Panel for the ensuing year.

835. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

835.1 There were none.

836. ANY OTHER NON-EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR/ CHAIR'S BUSINESS

836.1 The Chair welcomed Paul King and Rose Coates from Ernst & Young Auditors, and Nigel Chilcott, Senior Audit Manager, East Sussex County Council.

836.2 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive informed Members that, since the publication of the agenda, he had been notified by the National Joint Council that the Fire Brigades' Union would be balloting its members about industrial action. The Chair agreed that this matter may be considered as an urgent oral report and should be considered as an exempt matter under paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and, accordingly, would not be open for public inspection on the grounds that it includes information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultation or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

837. **TO CONSIDER PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS, IF ANY**

837.1 There were none.

838. **NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE LAST SCRUTINY AND AUDIT PANEL MEETING HELD ON 11 APRIL 2013**

838.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel held on 11 April 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book).

839. **CALLOVER**

839.1 Members reserved the following items for debate:

840. Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion for the Period 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

843. Member Lead Arrangements for 2013/14

844. Corporate Risk Register Review 1st Quarter (April to June 2013)

845. Environmental Issues - Progress Update – Year 2012/13

846. 2012/13 4th Quarter Performance Results

848. Rural Review Recommendation 8 (Maintaining availability At Mayfield, Burwash and Herstmonceux Fire Stations)

839.2 **RESOLVED** – That all other reports be resolved in accordance with the recommendations as detailed below.

840. **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2012 – 31 MARCH 2013**

840.1 Members considered a report of the Treasurer that provided an opinion on East Sussex Fire Authority's internal control environment and reported on the work of Internal Audit for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. (Copy in Minute Book).

840.2 On the basis of the audit work completed, East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) Head of Assurance, (as East Sussex Fire Authority's (ESFA) Head of Internal Audit), had been able to provide reasonable assurance that the Fire Authority had in place an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. Individual reports on the systems evaluated by internal audit included recommendations to enhance controls and therefore managers had drawn up action plans to implement these recommendations.

840.3 Members heard from Nigel Chilcott, Senior Audit Manager East Sussex County Council, that of the audits completed during 2012/13, 3 had received full assurance, 4 substantial assurance, 1 partial assurance and 1 minimal assurance. Two reviews were outstanding in respect of ICT network infrastructure and security follow up, and contracting and procurement.

840.4 Members' noted that an additional 35 audit days had been commissioned to cover particular areas of concern on behalf of Corporate Management Team and this Panel, as well as the decision taken to defer some work into 2013/14.

840.5 **RESOLVED** – That

- (i) the Internal Audit Service's opinion on the Fire Authority's internal control environment for 2012/13 be noted; and
- (ii) the Fire Authority's system for internal audit has proved effective during 2012/13 be noted.

841. **INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

841.1 Members considered a report of the Treasurer that provided an Internal Audit Plan for East Sussex Fire Authority covering the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2018. (Copy in Minute Book).

841.2 The Internal Audit Plan had been produced on a risk basis, following consultation with the former Assistant Chief Officer (Corporate Services), the Treasurer and the ESFA's external auditor – Ernst and Young.

841.3 With effect from 1 April 2013, the previous CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit had been replaced by new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), endorsed jointly by CIPFA and the Institute of Internal Auditors. The new PSIAS continued to require that a formal Internal Audit Charter for ESFA was in place and that this was subject to regular review. This review had recently been undertaken and an updated Charter, reflecting the latest requirements of the PSIAS, was presented to the Panel for consideration and approval.

841.4 **RESOLVED** – That the

- (i) 2013/14 Internal Audit Plan be approved; and
- (ii) updated Internal Audit Charter be approved.

842. **GRANTING DISPENSATIONS TO MEMBERS**

842.1 Members considered a report of the Monitoring Officer which informed Members of the issues in relation to granting dispensations to Members in relation to budget and Council tax issues and the Members' Allowance Scheme. (Copy in Minute Book).

842.2 Under the model Code of Conduct of the previous standards regime, any business relating to Members' allowances or the setting of a council tax precept was expressly precluded from being a prejudicial interest. No equivalent measures had been provided for under the current regime. To avoid any challenges to decisions relating to Members' Allowances and the setting of the council tax precept, it was recommended that Members seek dispensations to allow them to speak and vote on business relating to these issues. Under the current arrangements, the granting of dispensations was dealt with by the Scrutiny & Audit Panel or the Monitoring Officer, upon written request by the Member.

842.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to grant dispensations to all Members of the Fire Authority annually to allow them to consider issues relating to the budget and setting the council tax precept, and a Members' Allowance Scheme.

843. **MEMBER LEAD ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2013/14**

843.1 Members considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer seeking approval to a reduced number of Member Leads and nominations to those roles. (Copy in Minute Book).

843.2 Member Lead arrangements had been established in 2009/10 and had worked reasonably effectively since that time, although it was recognised that the workloads of the different streams had varied. Members noted that the number of Member Leads for such a small Authority was now probably disproportionate and that the same outcomes could be achieved with a smaller number. Also, under the current Members' Allowances scheme, Member Leads did not attract a Special Responsibility Allowance. Members considered that it would be appropriate for two Member Leads to be appointed to each area.

843.3 **RESOLVED** – That the reduction in the number of Member Leads be approved as set out below and Member Leads be nominated by Group Leaders and advised to the Clerk, as soon as possible.

Directorate	Lead Member	Lead Principal Officer
Response & Resilience Prevention & Protection	To be confirmed	DCFO Gary Walsh
Equality & Diversity	To be confirmed	DCFO Gary Walsh and ACO Cheryl Rolph
People and Organisational Development (to include Staff and Member Development)	To be confirmed	ACO Cheryl Rolph
Support Services to include Environmental and Sustainability	To be confirmed	ACFO Gary Ferrand
Sussex Control Centre	To be confirmed	ACO Cheryl Rolph

844. **CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW - 1ST QUARTER (APRIL TO JUNE 2013)**

844.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive on the latest quarterly review of Corporate Risk. (Copy in Minute Book).

- 844.2 Members were informed that the established Corporate Risk Management Policy helped to ensure Corporate Governance risk management arrangements were maintained. The effective monitoring of strategic risks was a critical function to support wider governance arrangements. Reviews of corporate risk took place on a quarterly basis. The latest series of meetings with Corporate Risk Owners had been carried out during June 2013 to update risk management action plans and review the position of each risk. The outcomes had been considered by Corporate Management Team. All risk management action plans had been updated following individual reviews for each risk owner to monitor and review each action plan in line with Service key task areas and other service delivery objectives.
- 844.3 Members considered the possible effects of the impending FBU ballot of its members for industrial action and the risk rating that should now be attributed to 'future industrial action' no. 41. Given the now higher likelihood of industrial action taking place, Members considered that the risk rating should be increased to 'high'.
- 844.4 **RESOLVED** – That, subject to
- (i) new risk no 45 ESMCP – Failure to implement economic, efficient and resilient solution to replace the current Firelink provision before 2016 being added to the register, and
 - (ii) the risk rating of no. 41 'future industrial action' being moved from CII to BII*;
[*Note – this decision was taken following consideration of the exempt oral report from the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive at item no 851].

the latest update to the Corporate Risk Register be approved.

845. **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - PROGRESS UPDATE – YEAR 2012/13**

- 845.1 Members considered a report from Councillor Rufus, the Lead Member for Environment and Sustainability, that advised the Panel, on behalf of the Fire Authority, on the activities to reduce energy consumption. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 845.2 The report built upon the work and activities undertaken over a number of years (starting with the Carbon Trust report of 2004/05) and included an update on the use of fleet fuel and mileage, heating fuels (oil and gas), electricity, waste and water, as well as the progress in respect to the carbon footprint. The 2012 Guidelines to Department for Energy & Climate Change Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Conversion Factors for Company Reporting had been used to produce the report. For the areas measured, the Authority was showing substantial reductions which exceeded the Authority's climate change indicator – to achieve a 3.5% annual reduction in CO2 emissions.
- 845.3 Councillor Rufus thanked ACFO Gary Ferrand and his staff for their work in reducing energy use, notable oil, LPG and electricity, and greenhouse gas reduction which was greater than 10% when compared to 2010/11.
- 845.4 Councillor Rufus drew attention to the planned work for 2013/14 set out in the report.

845.5 **RESOLVED** – That the outturn for 2012/13 and the related improvements since the last annual update, be noted.

846. **2012/13 - 4TH QUARTER PERFORMANCE RESULTS**

846.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented the Quarter 4 performance indicator results for 2012/13, compared with the results for the same quarter in 2011/12. (Copy in Minute Book).

846.2 In terms of the overall performance for 2012/13, of the Fire Authority's priority areas, 2 had met their targets, 2 were within 10% of achieving their targets and 1 had missed its target. The strategic performance indicator targets continued to expect performance improvement across the entire Service. However, in many areas, it was also accepted that both the rate and scope of future improvement was slowing, and some of the targets for 2012/13 and the future trends reflected this position.

846.3 Councillor Lambert asked if sprinkler installations would contribute towards reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive advised that sprinkler systems in themselves would not prevent fires from starting but would help to contain the extent of any fire and to extinguish them. The anticipated outcome from home safety visits was to reduce the incidents of accidental dwelling fires, install smoke detectors to provide early warning, and provide advice to householders. The installation of sprinkler systems had been proven to reduce fatalities from fires as recorded information indicated that in residential premises with properly maintained sprinkler systems, there was almost no recorded fire related fatalities.

846.4 Councillor Lambert asked why none of the newly recruited retained firefighters had been female.

846.5 The Assistant Chief Officer advised that it was difficult to attract applicants from women in small rural communities where there were competing pressures on their availability and selection criteria. The average percentage of wholetime female firefighters in the CFOA Group 2 of similarly structured Fire Authorities was 4%, and the East Sussex Fire Authority, it was 5%. For female retained firefighters, East Sussex was the same as the average at 4%.

846.6 Councillor Lambert asked what pay arrangements were in place for staff on sick leave.

846.7 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive advised that whole time firefighters injured on duty received full pay for 12 months, then half pay; if injured off-duty it was half pay after six months. Support staff received up to 6 months full pay depending on length of service. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive had delegated authority to extend an employee's period of sick leave on full pay outside agreed conditions of service.

- 846.8 Councillor Theobald asked if sky lanterns were likely to be the cause of fires. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive said there were few recorded cases of these causing fires. Paper sky lanterns presented greater risks of causing fires and some shops had stopped selling these. It was believed that the wicker basket lanterns presented less risk.
- 846.9 Councillor Theobald asked if householders were instructed on how to extinguish small accidental fires. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive said that the home safety visits provided comprehensive advice, but ESFRS did not specifically encourage the use of domestic fire extinguishers although if householders had purchased portable extinguishers, ESFRS advice was for householders to ensure they were trained in their use. Research was currently being undertaken in the south east into behavioural response to fires and the outcome of that study may influence future advice to householders and others.
- 846.10 **RESOLVED** – That the
- (i) 2012/13 performance results for Quarter 4 available to date, as set out in the report and complementary separate Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
 - (ii) information included within the exceptions report set out as Appendix B to the report, be noted.

847. **2012/13 KEY TASK AREAS AND CORPORATE PROJECTS – 4TH QUARTER OUTTURN RESULTS**

- 847.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that presented the 2012/13 4th quarter outturn results on Corporate Key Task Areas and Projects. (Copy in Minute Book).
- 847.2 In September 2011, the Corporate Management Team had agreed to streamline reporting processes by reporting on Key Task Areas and Corporate Projects through the Interplan system. Accordingly, Members considered the 4th quarter results for 2012/13 at a strategic summary level.
- 847.3 Of the 27 projects identified in terms of compliance with expected project completion timescales, Members noted the table below that summarised the outcomes both in terms of actual progress in accordance with planned progress (timeliness) and success of progress in terms of outcomes.

	Total No of projects	25% or under	26% to 50%	51% to 75%	76% to 99%	Completed
Key Task Areas	15	2	3	1	4	5
		a) Sussex Control Centre (Recorded at 8%; progress reported separately to ESFA) b) Newhaven Fire Stn	All as expected apart from KTA 3 Charging for AFAs which is delayed until outcome of Government Bill – remains 35% complete.			
		2	3	1	2	4
Other Corporate projects which are critical to organisational effectiveness improvements	12	Later phases – on track	All as expected apart from some functionality issues with Fireground Radios which are being resolved.			

847.4 Members also noted the relevant information provided by the Project Managers concerned in relation to whether a project is slipping, static or progressing to schedule.

847.5 **RESOLVED** – That the corporate progress made during 4th Quarter 2012/13 and within the context of all the other organisational work priorities being undertaken be noted.

848. **RURAL REVIEW RECOMMENDATION 8 (MAINTAINING AVAILABILITY AT MAYFIELD, BURWASH AND HERSTMONCEUX FIRE STATIONS)**

848.1 Members considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive that apprised the Panel of the outcome of Rural Review recommendation 8, regarding maintenance of availability at Mayfield, Burwash and Herstmonceux Fire Stations (Copy in Minute Book).

848.2 The Rural Review analysis highlighted the low call rate and low risk areas of these stations. Following public consultation, the original recommendation (that the appliances at these three fire stations be available during the evening/night time hours with no immediate cover provided from these fire stations during the day), was amended by the Fire Authority. The amended recommendation sought to maintain service delivery and review after two years. The availability of appliances at these stations had improved as a result of the action taken. Availability had improved at all three stations which, in the main, could be attributed to a more sustained recruitment strategy. Other factors had included improved management/rostering of local resources and, in some instances, wholtime staff applying for Retained Duty System roles.

848.3 Members noted that the context of a diminishing budget also needed to be considered alongside future Integrated Risk Management actions.

848.4 **RESOLVED** – That the success of the current recruitment efforts as appliance availability has improved across all three stations, be noted.

849. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

849.1 **RESOLVED** – That items numbers 850 and 851 be exempt under paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and, accordingly, were not open for public inspection on the grounds that they included information relating to any individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information), and information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultation or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

The meeting concluded at 12:40 hours.

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2013

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Panel: **Scrutiny & Audit**

Date: **19 September 2013**

Title: **External Auditor's Audit Report (ISA 260) and Statement of Accounts 2012/13**

By: **Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and Treasurer**

Purpose of Report: **To present the results of the External Auditor's Results Report (ISA 260) and to report an unqualified opinion on the Authority's 2012/13 Statement of Accounts.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Panel is asked to:

- (i) note the External Auditor's Audit Report (ISA 260);
- (ii) authorise the Treasurer to sign the formal letter of representation to the External Auditor; and
- (iii) approve the Statement of Accounts for publication.

MAIN ISSUES

1. The Authority's External Auditor, Ernst & Young, is obliged to produce an Audit Results Report (ISA 260) which reports formally on the outcome of the audit of the Authority's financial statements. The ISA 260 is appended as Appendix A as a separate document.
2. As a result of the audit, Ernst & Young expects to issue an unqualified opinion and has not identified any material issues to be reported to Members. The ISA 260 states that the Authority continues to provide high quality working papers and financial statements. Officers dealt promptly with any queries which contributed to an efficient audit process. It is pleasing to note that Ernst & Young has made no recommendations for improvement as a result of its audit of the accounts, and raised no specific issues which require a response in the Letter of Representation. A set of accounts is appended as Appendix B as a separate document.
3. The ISA 260 confirms that the Authority has in place proper arrangements for securing value for money.

Des Prichard
Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive
10 September 2013

Duncan Savage
Treasurer

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Panel: **Scrutiny & Audit**

Date: **19 September 2013**

Title: **Annual Statement of Operational Assurance**

By: **Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive**

Purpose of Report: **To present the Statement Of Operational Assurance for approval**

RECOMMENDATION: The Panel is asked to approve East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's Statement of Operational Assurance.

MAIN ISSUES

1. Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the statutory authority for the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and requires FRAs to have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions. In line with this, the Framework requires FRAs to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and in doing so they must publish an Annual Statement of Assurance.
2. The Statement of Operational Assurance is seen by Government as an important measure that will ensure that FRAs provide local scrutiny arrangements and access to a range of information to help communities influence, and be assured of the robustness of, local delivery arrangements.
3. The production of the Statement of Operational Assurance ensures that we comply with the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The DCLG guidance document requires that the Statement of Assurance is signed off by an elected member of the relevant authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents. The guidance states that it is up to the individual authority to ensure that this is done by an appropriate person (or persons) who can approve it on behalf of the Authority.
4. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's first annual Statement of Operational Assurance is attached as Appendix A. The Panel is asked to approve the document for formal approval and sign off by the Chair and the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive.

Des Prichard
Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive

1 August 2013

Background papers: Guidance on statements of assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England, Department for Communities and Local Government May 2013.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the statutory authority for the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and requires FRAs to have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions. In line with this, the Framework requires FRAs to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and in doing so they must publish an Annual Statement of Assurance.

2. MAIN ISSUES COVERED BY THE REPORT

- 2.1 The Statement of Operational Assurance is seen by Government as an important measure that will ensure that FRAs provide local scrutiny arrangements and access to a range of information to help communities influence, and be assured of the robustness of, local delivery arrangements.
- 2.2 In May 2013 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued light touch guidance as to what should be contained in Fire Authorities Operational Assurance Statements.
- 2.3 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's first annual Statement of Operational Assurance has taken note of the guidance and is attached as Appendix A.

3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT/NATIONAL/REGIONAL POSITION

- 3.1 The requirement to publish an annual Statement of Operational Assurance is contained within Chapter 3 of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Fire and Rescue Authorities must pay heed to the requirements of the Framework.
- 3.2 The Statement of Assurance will also be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under Section 25 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

4. CURRENT POSITION FOR EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

- 4.1 This is ESFRS's first Statement of Operational Assurance and has been written in order to ensure compliance with the DCLG's guidance document. The DCLG has indicated what should be included in statements of assurance, but it allows FRS the flexibility to tailor the format and presentation. The guidance states that 'it is for fire and rescue authorities to decide how to best present the information with their communities in mind'. Most other Fire Authorities are in the process of producing their own statements and the intention is to gather any examples of best practice in order to inform the way any future statements will look.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Consultations have taken place with a number of FRS in our family group to ascertain any areas of best practice, however, as all FRS's are completing their own first Statement then there is no specific model to follow. The Corporate Management Team has also seen a draft version for comments and advice.

6. CROSS DIRECTORATE ISSUES CONSIDERED (E.G. PEOPLE RESOURCING & TRAINING)

6.1 None arising from this report.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

7.1 None arising from this report.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None arising from this report

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 Political

The production of the Statement of Operational Assurance ensures that we comply with the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The DCLG guidance document requires that the Statement of Operational Assurance is signed off by an elected member of the relevant authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents. The guidance states that it is up to the individual authority to ensure that this is done by an appropriate person (or persons) who can approve it on behalf of the authority.

9.2 Environmental

None arising from this report.

9.3 Social

The purpose of the Statement of Operational Assurance is to ensure that fire and rescue authorities are accountable for the Services they provide to the communities they serve.

9.4 Technological

The Statement of Operational Assurance will need to be available on our website.

9.5 Legal

The production of the Statement of Operational Assurance ensures that we comply with the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

9.6 Economic

None arising from this report

10. COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None arising from this report

11. CORPORATE AND SERVICE RISK

11.1 None arising from this report

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None arising from this report, other than officer time in compiling the statement.

13. CONCLUSIONS

13.1 The requirement to publish an annual Statement of Operational Assurance is contained within Chapter 3 of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Fire and Rescue Authorities must pay heed to the requirements of the Framework. The publication of this statement ensures we meet that requirement. When other statements are available for other FRS we will ensure we will use any good examples to inform our future statements.

13.2 It is also the intention to merge the requirements of the annual Statement of Assurance with other legislative requirements placed on us through the production of an Annual Governance Statement. This work will take place this year to ensure that, in future, one statement of assurance is produced that covers all statutory requirements.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 It is recommended that the Panel approves East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's Statement of Operational Assurance for formal sign off by the Chair and the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive.

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Annual Statement of Operational Assurance

September 2013

Contents

1. Foreword
2. Financial Arrangements
3. Governance Arrangements
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5. Operational Assurance
6. Internal Audits and Assessments
7. Performance Management
8. Assurance Statement by the Fire Authority

1. Foreword and Introduction by Councillor Phil Howson Chairman East Sussex Fire Authority and Des Prichard Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive.

- 1.1 The Coalition Government is committed to reducing red tape and eliminating bureaucracy. This freedom and flexibility comes with the requirement that we need to ensure that we deliver our services in a responsible manner that provides accountability and transparency.
- 1.2 The Government requires us to provide information to our community on how your service is being provided. We must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show you how we are meeting our priorities through our plans as well as the expectations set for us in our legislative framework. To do this we have written our Operational Statement of Assurance
- 1.3 In line with the requirement to streamline, a lot of additional information about the themes covered in this document can be found in various publications on our website. So as not to duplicate information, we have provided links to the appropriate pages for reference.

2. Financial Arrangements

- 2.1 We are responsible for ensuring that our business and the service provided to you is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 2.2 By law, we must publish our financial results by 30 September every year and this is called our 'Statement of Accounts'. It shows the annual costs of providing the service to you and is produced under strict financial guidelines. This is essentially, a technical publication, which provides a true and fair view of our financial position, our income and expenditure for the year and our assets and liabilities.
- 2.3 The Fire Authority's accounts are subject to external audit by Ernst and Young LLP. They independently review our accounts to ensure that they give a true and fair view, have been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance and that we use the Authority's resources economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 2.4 For more information please see the financial pages of our website at <http://www.esfrs.org/fa/financialInformation.shtml>

3. Governance Arrangements

- 3.1 We are also required by Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, to produce an Annual Governance Statement which supports the Statement of Accounts. Good governance is about how the Authority ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. This statement assesses how effective our governance arrangements, risk management procedures and internal controls have been in helping us to deliver our services to the community and where they need to be improved.

3.2 Copies of our Annual Governance Statements for 2012/13, together with statements from previous years can be found on our website at <http://www.esfrs.org/fa/governance.shtml>

4. Data Transparency

4.1 All local authorities are requested to comply with the Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency. This means that certain public data must be made available to the public. The public data that should be made available includes:

Expenditure over £500

Details of salaries of staff paid over £58,200 per annum

An organisational staff chart

Councillor allowances and expenses

Policies, audits and performance

The location of public land and building assets

Data on the democratic running of the local authority including the constitution, committee minutes, decision making processes and records of decisions.

4.2 Much of this information is already provided on our website under 'local transparency' and we will be adding to this page regularly to make even more of our data freely available and accessible. For more information please see http://www.esfrs.org/about_us/localTransparency.shtml

5. Operational Assurance – Legislative Framework

5.1 Statutory Duties

5.1.1 The core functions of the Fire Authority are set down in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ("the Act") as follows:

- Fire Safety – a fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area (Section 6 of the Act);
- Fire Fighting – a fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of extinguishing fires in its area and protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area (Section 7 of the Act);
- Road Traffic Collisions – a fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of rescuing people in the event of road traffic collisions in its area and protecting people from serious harm, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, in the event of road traffic collisions in its area (Section 8 of the Act); and
- Other Emergencies – the Secretary of State may, by Statutory Order, confer on fire and rescue authorities' functions relating to emergencies other than fires and road traffic collisions. These may include chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear incidents, major transport incidents, search and rescue incidents and rescues from flooding.

5.1.2 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 fire and rescue authorities, through local and regional resilience forums where appropriate, must work in co-operation with other emergency services and agencies to ensure an effective response to a full range of emergencies from localised incidents to catastrophic emergencies. The Act imposes a range of duties on resilience forums that include:

- to have in place appropriate information sharing mechanisms between responders;
- to develop and implement business continuity plans;
- to produce and publish emergency plans as appropriate; and
- to agree arrangements for public awareness and information provision.

5.1.3 As a category 1 responder under the Civil Contingences Act 2004 we are required to formulate business continuity plans that ensure the continuation of our critical functions in the event of an emergency (an event or situation that threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, the environment of a place in the UK or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK). Ideally, we would be able to continue all our functions at ordinary service levels. In practice, this may not prove possible, and therefore our focus is on ensuring that our critical functions can be delivered so far as is reasonably practicable. These are:

- Responding to 999 emergencies;
- Delivering community & statutory fire safety;
- Supporting national resilience;
- All support functions that enable the above.

5.2 National Framework

5.2.1 Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act requires a fire and rescue authority to have regard to the National Fire and Rescue Framework, produced by the Secretary of State, when carrying out its functions. The Framework:
must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
may contain guidance for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions; and
may contain any other matters relating to fire and rescue authorities and their functions as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

5.2.2 The Fire and Rescue Services Act also makes it a statutory requirement for us to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Our Integrated Risk Management Plan process forms a key component of our strategic programme and significantly contributes toward achievement of our vision and strategic aims. The process enables us to identify the risk from fire and other emergencies to our communities and direct our resources to the areas of greatest need, based upon local risk analysis.

- 5.2.3 Proposals for any major changes through the IRMP process are consulted upon at the appropriate time. Views are sought on any IRMP reviews that are deemed appropriate for public consultation. Consultation methods have always been as wide ranging as possible and we include public meetings, focus groups and telephone surveys wherever appropriate.
- 5.2.4 Last year, under our IRMP proposals, we consulted on our service provision in Hastings with telephone surveys and focus groups. The consultation was comprehensive and we are confident that appropriate information was provided to enable active and informed participation of our communities. The option to relocate the Wholetime appliance from The Ridge Community Fire Station to Bohemia Road Community Fire Station was decided against following consultation with staff and the public.
- 5.2.5 The Fire Authority is satisfied that it has met all the requirements in the National Framework document in terms of producing its Integrated Risk Management Plan.
- 5.2.6 More information on IRMP can be found in the supporting documentation for our Medium Term Plan which includes detailed results of the consultation process. http://www.esfrs.org/document/pdf/planning/mediumTermPlan/appendix_17_integrated_risk_management_supporting_appendix.pdf

5.3 Mutual Aid

- 5.3.1 Section 13 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act requires fire and rescue authorities to enter into reinforcement schemes with other fire and rescue authorities, so far as practicable, for securing mutual assistance. Section 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act enables fire and rescue authorities to enter into arrangements for the discharge of their functions by others.
- 5.3.2 The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 outlines the additional statutory duties enabled by section 9 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The new duty requires authorities, where provision of resources has been made by central government, to respond to incidents, both within and outside the authority area, involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear hazards and Urban Search and Rescue
- 5.3.3 The Order complements the National Mutual Assistance Protocol, to which we are a signatory. This requires fire authorities to make a reasonable response to requests for assistance in relation to any large-scale emergency outside of their area.
- 5.3.4 To meet our responsibilities from the above legislation, we prepare emergency plans, train our staff in preparing those plans, and we undertake exercises to make sure they work.
- 5.3.5 We sponsor, organise and facilitate events which bring together key organisations from across the public, private and voluntary sectors to increase awareness about emergency planning issues, to make sure all of those agencies understand their responsibilities in the event of a major emergency.

- 5.3.6 We provide a supporting response to specialist risks over the border such as Gatwick Airport and Shoreham Harbour in West Sussex and Dungeness Power Station in Kent. We also assist other emergency services at any other incident where additional resources are required.
- 5.3.7 We also consider the risk to heritage sites, the environment and the continuing risk from terrorism. The National Risk Assessment is given careful consideration by the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) and the Service to monitor any new risks identified through these processes. The LRF is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the blue-light emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and other partners. These risks can affect the economy, cause disruption and impact on the day to day lives of our community and therefore understanding these risks within the County and the City provides a clearly defined baseline for us to develop our provision of service to the community we serve.
- 5.3.8 We also consider the wider risk assessments included within the SRF's Community Risk Register (CRR) to ensure that proposed changes to our service delivery complement, as far as possible, the strategies of other local responders and central government agencies. We make significant contributions to the preparation, pre planning and response to a wide range of events that are considered as part of the CRR. This analysis has enabled us to enhance our flooding capability by introducing a boat and swift water rescue team for responding to water rescues based at Crowborough Fire Station. This team is a declared asset and is available for response to local, regional or national flooding incidents.
- 5.3.9 We also plan for, and occasionally respond to, incidents of such scale and/or complexity that local resources may be insufficient even when taking into account mutual aid agreements. As part of the National Resilience New Dimensions Capability Programme, the Government has provided Incident Response Units (IRUs) and High Volume Pumps, (HVPs) into the UK Fire & Rescue Service. The national capability consists of 72 operational IRU's, with 9 being located in the South East region, one of which has been allocated to us and is based at Eastbourne Fire Station Eastbourne and 46 HVPs, with 7 being located in the South East region, 1 has been allocated to us and is based at Hove Fire Station.
- 5.3.10 Section 7(2) d of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires fire authorities to make arrangements for inspection of certain premises to obtain information. These inspections are known as 7(2) (d) visits. These visits assist in the maintenance of knowledge of the site, equipment and any particular hazards associated with the building. We use the 7(2) (d) visits together with any relevant data collection methods to assist in dealing with an incident, informing command decision making and ensuring public and firefighter safety.
- 5.3.11 For more information please see our Community safety section of the website. <http://www.esfrs.org/communitySafety/>.

5.4 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

- 5.4.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order requires that responsible persons in all premises, other than single private dwellings, carry out fire risk assessments. The auditing and enforcement of this activity is the responsibility of fire and rescue authorities to ensure people are protected from fire in places such as hotels, hospitals, entertainment venues and similar premises.
- 5.4.2 Our Business Safety Department enforces the provisions of the Fire Safety Order. The Department has a targeted programme for auditing all non-domestic premises in our area, based on the level of fire risk that each property presents. Fires in non-domestic premises not only have the potential to do harm to their occupants but also have a devastating effect on business. For more information please see <http://www.esfrs.org/businessSafety/>

5.5 Rule 43

- 5.5.1 Under the provisions of Rule 43 of the Coroners Rules, a Coroner who believes that actions should be taken to prevent the recurrence of fatalities similar to that in respect of which the Inquest is being held, may announce at the Inquest that he is reporting the matter in writing to the person or authority who may have power to take such action and he may report the matter accordingly.
- 5.5.2 Following an inquest into the tragic deaths of two firefighters on the 6 April 2010, when fighting a fire in a high-rise block of flats in Southampton, the Coroner K St J Wiseman wrote a Rule 43 Letter to Sir Ken Knight, Chief Fire and Rescue Advisers Unit, Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 5.5.3 Each Fire and Rescue Service must respond to the recommendations in the letter and examine existing procedures in the light of the recommendations and where necessary, take steps, to implement improvements. An action plan has been agreed by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and will be progressed during the next year to ensure we internally address the Coroner's recommendations.

5.6 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

- 5.6.1 As a "responsible authority" under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the fire and rescue authority has a statutory duty to work in partnership with key agencies in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. These are required to carry out annual strategic assessments to identify current and possible future crime, disorder and substance misuse issues from sound evidence and analysis.
- 5.6.2 We believe that partnership working between local agencies is key to providing 'joined up' public services for local people and to ensuring successful outcomes at the lowest cost for taxpayers. Our structure is based on a borough command geographical arrangement with specific officers responsible for community safety partnerships in their area. In addition, our Inclusion and Partnership Manager is responsible for delivery of our partnership strategy and undertaking an annual review of partnerships to ensure we are achieving the desired outcomes for our communities.

- 5.6.3 The annual review of Partnerships is presented to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel in September each year and can be accessed through this link:

http://www.esfrs.org/document/pdf/fa/ScrutinyPanel/2012/september/1209_SA_agd_PART_1_non_confidential.pdf.

5.7 The Localism Act 2011

- 5.7.1 The Localism Act takes as its starting point the existing statutory powers of fire and rescue authorities and then gives the Fire Authority the power to do:

Anything they consider appropriate for the purposes of carrying out their functions

Anything they consider appropriate for purposes incidental to carrying out their functions

Anything they consider appropriate for purposes indirectly incidental to carrying out their functions

- 5.7.2 It also added three new sections to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which allows Fire and Rescue Authorities to place a charging policy in support of its strategy to deal with unwanted fire signals received from automatic fire detection systems.

- 5.7.3 The charging power allows us a level of discretion in that we may decide not to charge at all, as is the case now, or we may charge different amounts to different groups of recipients when we respond to specific categories of calls. We have reduced false alarms by 32% over recent years, but last year we still attended 2,832 false alarms calls from automatic fire alarms. We will be reviewing our policy over the coming months in order to determine our approach to charging. For more information please see our reducing false alarms section on the internet. <http://www.esfrs.org/communitySafety/reducingFalseAlarms.shtml>

- 5.7.4 Under section 38(1) of the Act we are required to prepare a Pay Policy Statement. The Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring that that the pay policy statement sets out the issues relating to the pay of the workforce and in particular the senior officers and the lowest paid employees. This ensures that there is the appropriate accountability and transparency of the salaries of our senior staff. The purpose of the statement is to provide greater transparency on how taxpayers' money is used in relation to the pay and rewards for public sector staff.

- 5.7.5 Please see the local transparency section of our website: http://www.esfrs.org/document/pdf/fa/statementsOfAccounts/2012_13_Pay_Policy_Statement.pdf

6. Internal Audits and Assessments

6.1.1 East Sussex County Council's Internal Audit provides our internal audit reviews to meet the requirements of our Corporate Governance Framework to support the role of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel. An annual internal audit plan is agreed by the Scrutiny & Audit Panel following consultation between Principal Officers and Internal Audit about the risk priorities. Individual reports on our systems are evaluated by internal audit and include recommendations to enhance controls, and then action plans are developed to address and implement audit recommendations.

6.1.2 During 2012/13 a programme of audits, based on an assessment of risk, was carried out across ESFA. The areas audited that relate to our Operational effectiveness included:

- Whole Time Shift Leave Investigation
- Station Regularity Visits
- East and West Sussex Joint Control Project
- Firewatch Implementation

6.1.3 The programme also included audits on our financial, governance and other internal arrangements included:

- Precepting Arrangements
- Travel and Subsistence
- Audit of Fundamental Accounting Systems including the general ledger, pensions, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and Human Resources Payroll function
- National Fraud Initiative

6.1.4 Internal Audit gave the following opinion:
No assurance can ever be absolute; however based on the internal audit work completed, East Sussex County Council's Head of Assurance (as East Sussex Fire Authority's Head of Internal Audit) can provide reasonable assurance that East Sussex Fire Authority has in place an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. Audit testing has confirmed that the majority of key controls examined are working in practice, with some specific exceptions. Where improvements to control or compliance are required, we are satisfied that appropriate action has been agreed by the relevant managers within reasonable timescales.

6.1.5 For the full report please see the Scrutiny & Audit Agenda pages on our website.
<http://www.esfrs.org/fa/scrutinyPanel.shtml>

6.2 Operational Assessment

- 6.2.1 The Fire and Rescue sector has a strong and long standing commitment to sector led improvement. As part of this, the Chief Fire Officers Association developed the concept of Operational Assessment (OpA) in 2009, in partnership with the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser. This process, which has a strong operational focus, comprises a self -assessment and external peer challenge and is designed to allow a “whole system” look at how a Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) leads, prioritises and delivers the interrelated functions of prevention, protection and response.
- 6.2.2 Our next peer review is due to take place in January 2014.

6.3 Station Inspections

- 6.3.1 The Station Inspection programme is designed to support the continual performance improvement of our front line delivery services in terms of effectiveness, compliance with service operational and administrative procedures but above all, to ensure that the operational preparedness and safety of crews remains a priority
- The Inspection programme includes three elements:
- A review of station documents and records on Health & Safety, risk critical and business critical issues.
 - A practical drill session to observe basic core skills application.
 - A question and answers session to confirm underpinning knowledge and understanding on core safety related issues.
- 6.3.2 Immediate feedback is provided to duty managers and if any significant notices of improvement are issued, copies are provided to the Station Manager and Borough Commander who take direct responsibility for the implementation of improvement actions.

7. Performance Management

- 7.1 To help us improve in the right areas and demonstrate progress, we use performance management. This helps us to:
- Focus on our priorities.
 - Set targets aimed at improving services and measures progress.
 - Identify and tackle poor performance.
 - Be accountable to our communities.
 - Help ensure we provide value for money.
- 7.2 The Corporate Management Team (CMT), of four Principal Officers, the Treasurer and three Directors meet at least once a month to discuss strategic and policy issues and to monitor and determine service and financial plans into the future to ensure that we meet our statutory duties.

- 7.3 The Service to the public is then delivered by four directorates, Service Delivery Directorate, Service Support Directorate, Corporate Services Directorate and People & Organisational Development Directorate and their main responsibilities are:
- Service Delivery - operational response and resilience, new dimensions, community and legislative fire safety, and emergency planning;
 - Support Services - Health, Safety and Welfare, Engineering Services, Estates Management, and Information Management;
 - Corporate Services - business planning, financial planning and governance, strategic procurement development, support and review of performance and quality;
 - People and Organisational Development - development of staff, focusing particularly on personal leadership, developing managerial capability and embedding core values.
- 7.4 The Authority's priorities are articulated in our aims and objectives and contained in our planning documents. We produce a number of separate plans, all of which outline how we intend to deliver our services:
- Our Medium-Term Plan sets our longer-term direction and sets out how we intend to deliver our services based on community needs and the resources available to us.
 - Our Annual Plan and summarises what we've done over the last year, as well as what we intend to do over the following year
 - Each Directorate, Borough and Station has a more detailed local Action Plan that sets out their activities against our aims and objectives.
 - All of our staff have their own Personal Development Plans - which aid individual career development whilst, at the same time, providing a focus as to how their particular role helps deliver the overall aims of the Service.
- 7.5 The start to effective performance management is business planning. The purpose of which is to translate high-level objectives into management action and linked performance measures. Staff are able to see where their work area fits into the overall strategic direction of the Authority, what the targets are to be achieved in the year ahead and how their contribution fits into vision, aims and objectives.
- 7.6 On a monthly basis performance results are produced by Borough and Station. On a quarterly basis, the performance results are presented at Corporate Management Team in the form of a traffic light system. Any major variances are investigated to ascertain the cause and commentary is provided by the responsible officer. The reports are then presented to the Fire Authority for monitoring and further scrutiny purposes.

7.7 We also have clearly defined priority areas in which we concentrate our efforts. Each year we revisit them to ensure the targets remain appropriate. Our priority areas for 2013/14 are:

- Percentage of Home Safety Visits provided to vulnerable people should not be less than 70%.
- Number of accidental fires in dwellings should reduce by 5% over the period from 2011/12 to 2015/16.
- Ensuring accidental dwelling fires are confined to the room they started in on 94% of occasions.
- A 20% reduction in automatic fire alarms.
- Expenditure per head of the population should not exceed original budget.
- The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence for all staff should not exceed 7.5 days.

7.8 The Government set all Fire Authorities 10 year targets from 2001/02. We have been measuring our progress ever since against this benchmark year. The following table shows our reductions in performance over the twelve years from 2001/02 to 2012/13 and our performance from last year, 2011/12.

Summary Table

	Reduction since 2001/02	Reduction from last year
	+ /- %	+ /- %
Primary Fires (<i>fires in properties of value or involve more than 5 fire engines</i>)	-55%	-5%
Deliberate Primary Fires (<i>fires in properties of value or involve more than 5 fire engines where the cause of fire is suspected not to be an accident</i>)	-76%	-9%
Deliberate Road vehicle primary fires (<i>fires in vehicles that are not derelict where the cause of fire is suspected as not to be an accident</i>)	-83%	+7%
Secondary Fires (fires in derelict buildings, grass, heath, railway, straw, fence, bins etc.)	-72%	-44%
Deliberate secondary fires (<i>fires in derelict buildings, grass, heath, railway, straw, fence, bins etc. where the cause is suspected not to be accidental</i>)	-80%	-52%
Fires in houses where the cause was accidental	-29%	+4%
Non-fatal casualties by in fires	-59%	-15%
Malicious False Alarms	-70%	57%
False Alarms	-23%	-22%
False Alarms due to apparatus	-	-5%

- 7.9 These impressive statistics have been achieved through the hard work and dedication of all our staff. From our targeted community safety work achieved by our firefighters on stations and our Community Safety Department, to our Business Safety Teams delivering important advice and enforcing fire safety regulations, to all our staff in the back offices who all play a part in making our communities safer.
- 7.10 Further information on our people and resources and our services to the community and performance can be found in our plans and on the About Us page of our website at the following links, <http://www.esfrs.org/planning/mediumTermPlan.shtml>
<http://www.esfrs.org/wedomore/>

8. Assurance Statement by the Fire Authority

Good governance is about running things properly. It is the means by which the Fire Authority shows it is taking decisions for the good of the people of the area, in a fair, equitable and open way. It also requires standards of behaviour that support good decision making - collective and individual integrity, openness and honesty. It is the foundation for the delivery of good quality services that meet all local people's needs. It is fundamental to showing public money is well spent. Without good governance Fire Authorities will struggle to improve services.

From the review, assessment and on-going monitoring work undertaken and supported by the ongoing work undertaken by both Internal and External Audit, we have reached the opinion that, overall, key systems are operating soundly and that there are no fundamental control weaknesses.

We can confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, that this statement provides an accurate and fair view.

Signed

Signed

Date

Date

Councillor Sven Rufus

Des Prichard

Chair of the Scrutiny and Audit Panel

Chief Fire Officer & Executive

EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Panel: **Scrutiny & Audit**
Date: **19 September 2013**
Title: **Fatal Fire Review 2012 - 2013**
By: **Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive**
Purpose of Report: **To consider details of the fatal fires in East Sussex during 2012/13**

RECOMMENDATION: The Panel is asked to note:
(i) the report;
(ii) that all future fire deaths and fires involving serious injuries continue be fully profiled to provide a wider data pool to enable the better of targeting vulnerable groups; and
(iii) that the Community Risk Management Team continues to engage in partnership activity that reduces the risk to vulnerable people in the community.

MAIN ISSUES

1. There were four dwelling fires resulting in fatalities across East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove during the financial year 2012/13, three of the fatalities were deemed to be as the result of accidental fires. This total is a significant reduction on the 12 fatalities reported in 2011/12.
2. Greater collaboration with partners in both identifying the risks and identifying those susceptible to fire has undoubtedly contributed significantly to this reduction.
3. The Community Risk Management Team continues to develop links with organisations to target vulnerable people to further reduce the incidence of fires and therefore fire fatalities and where they do occur, a serious case review is undertaken to identify underlying causes that can be addressed by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service or our partners.

Des Prichard
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
25 July 2013

Background reports/papers: CMT Paper, Fatal Fire Review, April 2012
Analysis report detailing fatal fires for the previous 10 years ¹ CDLG data ²

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. It was previously reported that over the last ten years (2002/03 to 2011/12) East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) had experienced a total of 41 Accidental Fire Deaths. From 2002/03 until 2006/07 ESFRS experienced 15 Accidental Fire Deaths, averaging 3 fatalities per annum.
- 1.2. From 2007/08 to 30/04/2012 ESFRS experienced 26 Accidental Fire Deaths, averaging approximately 5 fatalities per annum. It should be noted that 2008/09 and 11/12 were abnormally high, with the rest of that 5 year period averaging 3 per annum, as per the previous 5 years.
- 1.3. In 2011/12 there were 12 fatal dwelling fires, 10 of which were as a result of accidental dwelling fires. In 2012/13 there were 4 fatal fires, of which 3 were fatalities as a result of accidental fires in dwellings.
- 1.4. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) has considered the strategic issues relating to these fire deaths, and a report covering the last 10 years performance was considered as background, which included accidental and deliberate fire deaths, and to identify the trends and issues that may assist CMT to take a strategic view on performance and interventions to prevent further fatal fires. The previous data reported in 2012 has been amended to include the current 10 year data to 2012/13 and can be found as Appendix A.
- 1.5. Officers from across the Prevention and Protection Directorate drew on recorded data, specific information from each incident, information provided by other Fire and Rescue Services and professional judgement to draw a number of conclusions that it is expected will reduce the risk of people continuing to become victims of fires. Although early days, this appears to have been the case with a reduction from 10 to 3 accidental fire deaths.

2. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

- 2.1. Accidental dwelling fires across England have fallen from 42,850 in 2001/02 to 29,600 in 2012/13, a reduction of 31% on 2001/02 figures. Accidental dwelling fires in the ESFRS area fell from 783 in 2001/2 to 556 in 2012/13, a reduction of 28.9% on 2001/02 but a 7.2% increase on 2011/12.²
- 2.2. The number of fatal accidental dwelling fires across England has also declined from 310 in 2001/02 to 271 in 2012/13, a reduction in 12.5% on 2001/02².
- 2.3. The increase in fatal accidental dwelling fires in 2011/12 across East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove was not echoed nationally or regionally and has not continued into 2012/13 which saw 4 fire deaths, three of which were considered to be accidental.

- 2.4. The review considered the key elements associated with the three fire deaths and found that there has been a change in the key contributing factor involved in the 10 fatalities which had been largely associated with smoking materials.
- 2.5. Two of the fatalities involved men aged 68 and 71 years. Both were heavy alcohol drinkers. Alcohol is considered to have played a significant part in each death. In one case, the victim died following a fire that started by smoking materials coming into contact with the sofa or his clothing. Whilst alone at the time his wife described him as a heavy drinker and it is believed that alcohol played a part in the death.
- 2.6. The second case involved a man who was a heavy alcohol drinker who died following the unintentional ignition of his clothing when he made contact with a gas fire. It is believed he came into contact with the fire after drinking heavily. He was known to have previously collapsed due to excessive drinking.
- 2.7. The third case was entirely different from the first two. The fire involved a 60 year old female who had just been released from Hospital and who had limited mobility and energy levels. As a result of this she slept in the living room. The fire started in a television cabinet that housed three electrical appliances in the living room and she had been unable to react to the fire. She tragically died in hospital later that night.
- 2.8. A considerable amount of collaboration with Partners has been developed following the 10 fatalities in 2011/12 including work with Public Health to reduce smoking and tackle harmful drinking. A new Tobacco Partnership has commenced in East Sussex and ESFRS is a key member of the Board. We undertake joint advertising from both organisation's perspectives (See Appendix B).
- 2.9. Following the smoking materials related deaths in 2011/12, the Community Safety Department (CSD) commissioned a company to develop a lap cloth that is fire resistant and can be placed over a smoker's lap, either on a chair or bed, when smoking. This will reduce the likelihood of smoking materials igniting clothing, bedding or incontinence pads which were contributory factors in previous years deaths. This is an innovative project which is already in use, with lap blankets being gifted to the most vulnerable smokers.
- 2.10. ESFRS has teamed up with Trading Standards to support their drive to prevent sales of counterfeit cigarettes. European Union legislation (enacted on 17/11/11) prohibits the sale of cigarettes that do not self-extinguish if left unattended. Counterfeit and smuggled cigarettes do not have this property and therefore pose a risk if dropped on a chair, sofa, bed or clothing.
- 2.11. ESFRS is represented on the East Sussex County Alcohol steering group which is committed to reduce harmful drinking and alcohol related anti-social behaviour. The two deaths related to alcohol are cited to demonstrate the urgency of the task. In addition, ESFRS works closely with Action for Change, a charity who works with people who are dependent on alcohol and they refer their clients for Home Safety Visits (HSVs). ESFRS has sponsored alcohol measuring vessels to help people to gauge their alcohol consumption.

- 2.12. An information sharing agreement was signed between East Sussex Adult Social Care and ESFRS to share their data on people in the County who are in receipt of a care package, whether funded by County, or not, to ensure that the most vulnerable are offered a home safety visit as a priority. The City Council also rose to the challenge of sharing data with ESFRS and every one of their clients receiving care is being asked to consent to a referral to ESFRS for an HSV. In the case of both Councils, all new clients are now asked about consent for referral at the first screening call, resulting in a significant increase in referrals for this key vulnerable group.
- 2.13. In discussions with Partners, Community Risk Management (CRM) staff makes it clear that our definition of vulnerability is inclusive. If a Partner organisation considers a person to be vulnerable by their own Organisation's definition, so will ESFRS and an HSV will be offered on that basis.
- 2.14. ESFRS, in common with a number of other organisations, including the Police, Councils and others involved in community safety, have always found it challenging to engage with Health Services to share data or to participate in key pieces of work. Notwithstanding this historic reluctance, CRM staff undertook a series of meetings with the Hospital Trust to develop information sharing to refer vulnerable people who are at significant risk if released from hospital and return home. This group would involve those who live alone, with an infirmity or limited mobility (which may be as a result of their hospital stay and may be short-lived), suffering from dementia or on medication that impairs their capacity to react.
- 2.15. Hospitals undertake a pre-release assessment of patients in relation to social care and medical needs, and will now assess patients from a risk of fire perspective. This is a complex area of work. There are well over 100 people who would fit into this category released from hospitals across East Sussex *every day*, without considering hospitals in Brighton, West Sussex, Surrey and Kent who also treat East Sussex patients. A small pilot involving the Minor Injuries Units and walk-in centres, which mainly treat people who would fit into this category, is being undertaken to test the capacity for ESFRS to cope with the potential numbers, and for Hospitals to develop a scheme that ensures the 'safe from fire' assessment is undertaken.
- 2.16. The CRM Department has developed an information and referral leaflet and awareness training is being rolled out to National Health Service (NHS) staff. It is clear from the numbers of vulnerable people who would trigger an HSV that a new way of undertaking these visits needs to be developed. This is an on-going piece of work that is being progressed in collaboration with the Hospital Trusts.
- 2.17. ESFRS' statistical search tool, the Cube, is widely used to predict and identify where vulnerable people live, and this information is heavily used to deliver the 10,000 home safety visit target that ESFRS has committed to. Our current target is to ensure that 70% of those we visit are classed as vulnerable. At present we are reaching 86% vulnerability. The three fatalities were within groups that the Cube recognised as being a low fire risk and, therefore, would not have been identified by this method.
- 2.18. Since mid 2012, the Director of Prevention and Protection (DPP) convenes a meeting immediately following a serious or fatal fire to draw together Department

Leads, as well as those from outside agencies as necessary to examine the details as known at the time, in order to ensure that any learning points are enacted immediately and any emerging issues are appropriately tackled. This does not replicate or detract from the work undertaken by the Fire Investigator, but ensures that the Service recognises learning experiences and applies them in a timely manner.

- 2.19 Within ESFRS, CRM analysts are inputting the data received from Adult Social Care to seek to change the scope of those defined as being vulnerable. The Cube should then pick up individuals we are at present overlooking, allowing for improved targeting.
- 2.20 For the sake of completeness, it would be appropriate to mention the fourth fatality which occurred in Brighton and Hove and resulted from a deliberate act. A commercial premises was being occupied as a squat. Following service of a notice to quit the premises a deliberate fire was set, believed to be by the victim, who became trapped within the building and died as a result
- 2.21 The CRM Department considered all of the factors involved in this tragedy and as a result developed an information leaflet, targeted at people in this position, with fire safety information and a list of organisations including Housing Departments, Drug & Alcohol helplines, Domestic Abuse, Shelter, The Samaritans and ESFRS, which are handed out by Fire Safety Officers when they visit these types of premises during the course of their inter-agency work.
- 2.22 In 2012 the CSD increased the number of training days for Community Safety Advisors (CSAs) and crews from 2 a year to 4. The training day is now more formally structured and incorporates recent changes to our procedure and reporting. An outside speaker is now included in the session to deliver an input on issues ranging from mental illness to domestic abuse, and identifying risks such as domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. In addition, training will be provided for staff to better understand people's behaviour so that risks such as smoking in a particular location, including the use of an old, fire susceptible chair/sofa can be identified, and solutions offered.
- 2.23 The CRM Department is working more closely with the Communications Team to develop and promote material in newsletters, magazines, leaflets, our website and social media to reduce risk and raise awareness in our key areas, cooking, smoking, alcohol etc. to influence behaviour.
- 2.24 Community Volunteers are involved in reducing risk. Our newly started Health and Wellbeing visits target the most vulnerable people who have previously had an HSV. These visits will concentrate on an holistic approach to include fire safety, but also to provide information and signposting to other risk areas, such as warm homes, healthy eating, eyesight, slips trips and falls.
- 2.25 The Department is developing a new piece of work with volunteers to encourage healthy eating, targeting the poor diet and eating habits associated with obesity, a risk area that is associated with accidental dwelling fires and a variety of health problems.

3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT/NATIONAL/REGIONAL POSITION

3.1. As previously detailed.

4. CURRENT POSITION FOR ESFRS

4.1. Fire Safety in the Home Manual Note issued January 2012 (currently being revised).

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1. Not applicable.

6. CROSS DIRECTORATE ISSUES CONSIDERED (E.G. PEOPLE RESOURCING & TRAINING)

6.1. Not applicable.

7. HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. The introduction of a Partnership and Inclusion Coordinator role within the CRM Department will enhance the work of the Community Risk Analysts in ensuring minority groups and equality and diversity are truly captured.

8.2. Cube does not provide any data in respect of gypsy/travellers resident in the area. Borough staff will be aware of sites within their area and must ensure that they are included in the HSV assessments, particularly where vulnerable people, such as the elderly, those with limited mobility and other needs are concerned. Similarly, unregistered migrant workers do not feature within the Cube data, but will also likely be known to Borough staff and should be included in HSV assessments.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS CONSIDERED

9.1. Not applicable

10. POLITICAL

10.1. There are no political issues apparent from this report.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL

11.1. None

12. SOCIAL

12.1. None

13. TECHNOLOGICAL

13.1. None

14. LEGAL

14.1. None

15. ECONOMIC

15.1. None

16. COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS

16.1. None.

17. CORPORATE AND SERVICE RISK

17.1. The significant increase in fatal fire deaths in 2011/12 posed a risk to the reputation of the Service and Fire Authority. With a significant reduction in the number of fatalities this risk has diminished.

18. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

18.1. An increase in the number of HSVs resulting in the sharing of County's database will probably increase the pressure on the budget for the CRM Department to cater for the fitting of additional smoke alarms as will the provision of other tactics, such as lap blankets. However, many of the properties will already have smoke alarms fitted, either hard wired or battery operated, so not every one of the additional referred premises will result in an extra cost in respect of equipment.

18.2. ESFRS has negotiated agreements with the Sensory Teams in East Sussex and the City for all sensory equipment to be paid for by the Sensory Teams. In the past ESFRS has paid for this equipment.

19. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

19.1. It is anticipated that CRM performance will be enhanced as a result of the additional work.

20. CONCLUSIONS

- 20.1. The significant reduction in accidental fire fatalities from 10 to 3 would demonstrate that ESFRS is broadly on the right track. The key to reducing risk lies with effective partnership working which this Service is excelling in, with innovative working agreements and schemes to tackle the most vulnerable groups.
- 20.2. We continue to seek opportunities to share best practice, ensure that other organisations understand the benefits of closer collaboration with this Service and thereby reach out to those who are most vulnerable.
- 20.3. We are confident that we now better understand the complex factors that contributed to the increase in fire deaths over 2011/12 and believe that we are taking the right steps to continue to reduce the likelihood of so many fires resulting in injury and death.

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Panel **Scrutiny & Audit**

Date: **19 September 2013**

Title: **2012/13 Review of progress with Partnerships**

By: **Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive**

Purpose of Report: **To advise the Panel of the outcome of the review of partnerships completed for 2012/13 and other changes affecting partnerships.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Panel is asked to note the report.

MAIN ISSUES

1. The Fire Authority has been involved with a range of partnerships to meet the needs of our local communities. The Community Safety agenda within our area is based upon a range of partnership activity to which agreed partners contribute resources and work to achieve common goals. This area of partnership working has increased significantly over the last 12-18 months but with a greater emphasis on reducing duplication of effort.
2. ESFRS is leading the way in this area with Home Safety Visits and Health & Wellbeing visits. Many of the station and borough level partnerships that ESFRS is involved in are specific to their own areas. Through partnerships exchanging information and making referrals at a local level, action can be taken promptly through or with partners which benefits businesses, residents, visitors as well as the Fire & Rescue Service itself.
3. In June 2013 ESFRS agreed to take on the coordinating role for all road safety activity within East Sussex. Road safety has been a high priority for a number of Boroughs for several years with partnership working delivering some significant reductions in the number of people killed and seriously injured
4. Every partnership is evaluated on an annual basis by the ESFRS Lead. As part of this evaluation, Borough Commanders have been assessing their capacity to support partnerships in light of reducing resources and competing demands. The effective management of partnership working is critical at a strategic level. As a result of the evaluation process, it has been established that the Fire Authority currently has a total of 54 partnerships that focus upon community safety issues, a reduction of three partnerships over the year. It will be essential for partners to work together to limit the impact of tightening public spending on frontline community safety services.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Fire Authority has been involved with a range of partnerships including National and Regional Partnerships (CFOA); Regional Fire & Rescue Partnerships; Local Authority Partnerships; Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs); Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs); joint or shared services; joint commissioning and procurement /supply partners and service delivery partnerships to meet the needs of our local communities.
- 1.2 The Community Safety agenda within our area is based upon a range of partnership activity, which may involve using partners to refer vulnerable people to us; joint working; partner sponsored activities undertaken by our personnel or jointly agreed, to which agreed partners contribute resources and work to achieve common goals. This area of partnership working has increased significantly over the last 12-18 months but with a greater emphasis of reduced duplication of effort. ESFRS is very much leading the way in this area with Home Safety Visits and Health & Wellbeing visits delivering key health and social care messages, as well as providing and outcome which may result in referring relevant cases to partners to reduce overall risk issues.
- 1.3 Many of the station and borough level partnerships that ESFRS is involved in are specific to their own areas, or to vulnerable members of the community e.g. domestic abuse victims and elderly people, anti-social behaviour, hot spots where deliberate fire setting is a concern, acting promptly to remove abandoned vehicles and board up empty properties in order to reduce fires. Through partnerships exchanging information and making referrals at a local level, action can be taken promptly through or with partners which benefits businesses, residents, visitors as well as the Fire & Rescue Service itself.
- 1.4 In June 2013 ESFRS agreed to take on the coordinating role for all road safety activity within East Sussex following adoption of road safety as a priority within the community safety agenda by East Sussex Safer Communities as well as Sussex wide by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Road safety has been a high priority for a number of Boroughs for several years with partnership working delivering some significant reductions in the number of people killed and seriously injured. The change in approach to road safety will see a more consistent outcome for the whole County and will undoubtedly improve the partnerships involved in this important area of work.

2. **PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION**

- 2.1. Every partnership is evaluated on an annual basis by the ESFRS Lead, typically the Borough Commander, or for the case of more corporate partnerships the Inclusion and Partnerships Coordinator. As part of the evaluation process Borough Commanders have been assessing their capacity to support partnerships in light of reducing resources and competing demands. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the City where the Borough is working with the City Council, and others, to identify which of the 32 groups and sub-groups the service will continue to work in partnership with.

2.2 The Fire Authority has a business case and evaluation process, approved by the Scrutiny & Audit Panel in March 2010, for all community safety partnerships. This robust business approach is based upon the 3 Es: Economy (minimum levels of input - value for money); Efficiency (effective use of resources allocated to the project) and Effectiveness (measurable outcomes to make a difference to the community).

2.3. The outcome of the reviews is shown below:

	Number at 1/4/12	Number Ceased	Number Added	Number at 31/3/13
The City	14	0	0	14
Eastbourne	6	0	1	7
Hastings	5	1	0	4
Lewes	10	3	1	8
Rother	3	0	1	4
Wealden	5	0	0	5
Community Safety Department/ HQ	14	2	0	12
Total change recorded on Partnership register	57	6	3	54

2.4 As a result of the evaluation process, it has been established that the Fire Authority currently has a total of 54 partnerships that focus upon community safety issues, a reduction of three partnerships over the year.

2.5 All organisations find it difficult to quantify success in terms of outcomes from partnerships and the Fire Authority is no exception. However, the arrangements in place provide reasonably robust evidence that overall value for money is being achieved with regard to partnership working in terms of measured resource inputs relative to levels of outputs and outcomes achieved. ESFRS, through the Partnership Focus Team chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, will continue to monitor the impact of its Community Safety activities to ensure that the Service targets resources and delivers value for money.

3. **CONCLUSIONS & WAY FORWARD**

3.1 The effective management of partnership working is critical at a strategic level. The Partnership Focus Team (PFT) has been restructured to provide a framework for key stakeholders in the partnership agenda. This will ensure that Corporate leadership and direction is maintained and performance outcomes can be achieved and that those decisions, in relation to levels of partnership engagement balanced against corporate capacity, can be evidence based.

3.2 The challenge over the next few years is for public organisations to manage reducing resources whilst maintaining a commitment to provide good local public services. It will be essential for partners to work together to limit the impact of tightening public spending on frontline community safety services.

Des Prichard
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
 28 August 2013

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Panel:	Scrutiny & Audit
Date:	19 September 2013
Title:	2013/14 1st Quarter Performance Results
By:	Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive
Purpose of Report:	To present the first quarter performance indicator results for 2013/14.

RECOMMENDATION: The Panel is asked to:

- (i) note the 2013/14 performance results for Quarter 1 available to date, as set out in the report and complementary separate Appendix A; and
 - (ii) consider the information included within the exceptions report set out in Appendix B.
-

MAIN ISSUES

1. This report contains the Quarter 1 performance indicator results for 2013/14, compared with the results for the same quarter in 2012/13.
2. The report provides a simple Red, Amber, Green traffic light system. Where particular indicators show two or more reds, Appendix B summarises the explanations from the relevant responsible officers in relation to the variances in performance.
3. The Fire Authority has six priority areas:
 - Percentage of Home Safety Visits (HSV) to the vulnerable members of our community
 - Number of accidental fires in dwellings
 - Percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin
 - Percentage reduction of automatic fire alarms
 - Expenditure per head of the population on the provision of Fire & Rescue Services (annual Indicator)
 - Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence for all staff
4. In terms of the overall performance for 2013/14, of the Fire Authority's priority areas, 2 are on target and 2 are within 10% of achieving their targets. The results for the two remaining priority areas are not available at the time as one is an annual indicator and the other is not available due to the installation of a new software product. The performance outcome summary is set out in Appendix A attached as a separate document, with an exceptions report set out as Appendix B.

5. The Panel is reminded that our strategic performance indicator targets continue to expect performance improvement across the entire Service. However, in many areas, it is also accepted that both the rate and scope of future improvement is slowing, and some of our targets for 2013/14 and the future trends reflect this position. In some areas, performance improvement will prove ever harder to achieve without smarter targeting of risk and community need. This is where the Service is striving to ensure all available information and tools at our disposal achieve even tighter targeting of services to the most vulnerable in our local communities in future years.

Des Prichard
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
29 August 2013

APPENDIX B

EXCEPTIONS REPORT – QUARTER 1, 2013/14

Indicator	Commentary	Actions to be Taken	Responsible Officer
9 & 11. Deaths in primary & accidental dwelling fires.	There was one fatality in quarter 1 2013/14 and one in the same period last year.	One death in a preventable house fire is one too many. We will continue to educate our communities and raise awareness of the dangers of fire.	Director of Response and Resilience
16. Inspections of high risk premises completed.	There were 124 audits completed in quarter 1. This gives a projected year end result of 497 against a target of 700. In quarter 1 2012/13 199 audits were completed.	Several staffing issues have impacted on the first quarter's performance. It is hoped these will be resolved throughout the year.	Director of Prevention and Protection.

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Panel: **Scrutiny & Audit**
Date: **19 September 2013**
Title: **2013/14 Key Task Areas and Corporate Projects – 1st quarter outturn results**
By: **Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive**
Purpose of Report: **To present the 2013/14 1st quarter outturn results on our corporate Key Task Areas and Projects.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Panel is asked to note the corporate progress made during 1st Quarter 2013/14 within the context of the other work priorities.

MAIN ISSUES

1. Since September 2011, the Corporate Management Team has reported progress on Key Task Areas (KTAs) and Corporate Projects through the Interplan system. Accordingly Appendix A, attached as a separate document, contains the 1st quarter results for 2013/14 at a strategic summary level.
2. Interplan have recently revised the reporting system, which has resulted in a more “reader-friendly” report format and a colour code to identify whether KTAs/ Projects are progressing to schedule.
3. Currently there are 22 projects (10 KTAs and 12 Corporate Projects). Of the 10 KTAs, 7 are progressing on or close to schedule and 3 are behind schedule including KTA 7 (Develop a Community Interest Company), which has not started.

Of the 12 Corporate Projects, 9 are progressing on or close to schedule and 3 are behind schedule.
4. The Appendix attached separately provides further details in the more “reader-friendly” and colour coded format. It also includes ‘SMART’ (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely) comments from the relevant Project Manager on the progress of each Project.
5. The Panel is asked to note the corporate progress made during 1st Quarter 2013/14 within the context of the other organisational work priorities being undertaken.

Des Prichard
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
28 August 2013

EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Panel: **Scrutiny & Audit**
Date: **19 September 2013**
Title: **Customer Service Excellence Standard**
By: **Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive**
Purpose of Report: **To present the outcome of the recent assessment by the appointed Customer Service Excellence Assessor.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Panel is asked to note the successful outcome of the recent assessment for the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

MAIN ISSUES

1. David Thornton, the appointed assessor, visited ESFRS over 16 & 17 July 2013 and undertook the assessment (year three of a three year rolling assessment) of evidence for the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard. As part of the assessment he examined the presented evidence, visited and spoke to various staff at Uckfield and Hastings Fire Stations, the Retained Crew at Broad Oak Fire Station and also some of the duty watch at Eastbourne about the Aerial Rescue Pump (ARP). He also observed staff and spoke to members of the public following an incident at St Leonards. In addition, at Headquarters he met the Inclusion & Partnership Co-ordinator, the Arson & Incident Reduction Manager, the previous Head of Learning & Development and undertook a series of telephone interviews with selected partners.
2. Following the assessment, ESFRS continues to hold the Customer Service Excellence standard and is one of six Fire & Rescue Services with the award, the others (listed in 2012) being South Wales FRS, West Yorkshire FRS, Greater Manchester FRS, Humberside FRS and Oxfordshire FRS.

In order to achieve the standard an organisation must have services that are “efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering – with the citizen always and everywhere at the heart of service provision. With particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. Developing customer insight, understanding the user’s experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.”

3. Appendix A provides the four page summary of the assessment against the elements, which make up the standard. The Assessor made four awards of “Compliance Plus” (an increase from three awards last year) and considered that only one element of the 57 elements remains “partially met” (a reduction from two elements in the previous 2012 assessment).

4. Compliance Plus is awarded where “all aspects of the element are met, and the applicant can demonstrate that they have gone beyond the requirements”. Awards were made for the following elements:
- **1.1.3 (We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.)** Comment – “You continue to focus on understanding the needs of your most vulnerable customer groups in order to tailor services to meet their needs. Your development of a range of community safety and incident reduction services are proving very successful.”
 - **2.2.2 (Our staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.)** Comment – “Surveys and feedback from users, partners and community groups demonstrate that your staff fully understand the needs of customers. The depth of understanding and empathy for some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in the community continues to justify Compliance Plus.”
 - **3.4.1 (We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers.)** Comment – “Your co-provided services have very real benefits for your customers, particularly the most vulnerable in the community. Continues to justify compliance plus and an example of best practice.”
 - **3.4.3 (We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.)** Comment – “You continue to emphasise the need to support the community through a range of initiatives including the Community Volunteers and the Care Providers Scheme. The breadth of support continues to justify Compliance Plus.”
5. In addition to the above, the Assessor also made some very positive comments, which are detailed in Appendix A.
6. The Assessor considered that only one element remained partially met, as follows:
- **2.2.3 (We prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.)** Comment – “While your performance management system continues to include evaluation of the commitment of each individual employee we understand you have taken the decision not to extend this to team assessment at least for the time-being, consequently this remains partially compliant with the Standard.” CMT previously considered this issue following the 2010 assessment and decided not to take further action at that time.
7. The Panel is asked to note the successful outcome of the recent assessment for the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

Des Prichard
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
28 August 2013

CSE Assessment Summary 2013 Overview

Overall Self-assessment: Strong
Overall outcome: Successful

This was a well presented application with evidence properly cross referenced to the appropriate elements. The Service covers the whole of East Sussex including the City of Brighton and Hove and consequently within the time available it was only possible to visit four operational Fire Stations and a selection of support services within the Service Headquarters in Eastbourne. However, during his visit our assessor was pleased that the Service was regularly praised by customers and partners not only for your operational performance but for your willingness to listen to new ideas and your support for community initiatives.

Update 2011- Despite continuing constraints on resources the Service has made great strides towards meeting more fully the requirements of the Standard. In addition to your H.Q. our assessor was able to visit three full-time stations at Crowborough, Newhaven and Eastbourne as well as a retained station at Pevensey. This gave the assessor scope to speak with a number of Borough Commanders, Station Managers, Watch Managers and fire-fighters over the two days and he was impressed by the commitment of all the employees he met. This was further endorsed by a wide range of statutory and community partners spoken to during the assessment. Of the ten elements previously considered to only partially comply with the Standard now all but three fully meet the requirements. Furthermore, one more element is now considered to exceed the Standard and assessed as Compliance Plus.

Update 2012- During this assessment in addition to HQ the assessor visited Hove, Preston Circus Brighton and Bexhill where he met retained firefighters. The application contained a considerable amount of new evidence reflecting the continued high level of performance generally against the requirements of the Standard. **All three elements previously identified as Compliant Plus remain so.** Of the three elements previously considered to only partially meet the Standard, **element 4.1.2 now fully meets** the requirements. All in all this was a very successful assessment.

Update 2013- Again evidence was well presented and relevant. Our assessor visited whole time stations at Eastbourne, Uckfield, Hastings as well as the retained station at Broad Oak. In addition to speaking with a range of statutory and voluntary partners the assessor witnessed the aftermath of a house fire in St. Leonards, where he was able to speak with residents. During the visit the assessor was impressed by the commitment of staff and the excellent reputation you have in the community.

1: Customer Insight

Criterion 1 self-assessment Strong

Criterion 1 outcome Successful

You have a highly developed insight into the needs and aspirations of the broad range of existing and potential customers you serve. The award of Compliance Plus for element 1.1.3 acknowledges your particular efforts to reach the most difficult and vulnerable people in your community, together with your work with young people at risk of offending through the LIFE initiative. Two elements (1.3.1 and 1.3.4) were considered only partially met at this stage.

Update 2011- All elements are now felt to fully comply with the Standard. The assessor was particularly impressed with the detailed information you have built up on the characteristics of potential fire victims which we understand you are in the process of rolling out across all stations to enable them to better target home safety visits. **Element 1.1.3 remains Compliance Plus** in recognition of your continued commitment to maintain and promote innovative ways of reaching disadvantaged groups.

Update 2012- You continue to focus on understanding the needs of your most vulnerable customer groups in order to tailor services to meet their needs. Your development of a range of community safety and incident reduction services are proving very successful.

Update 2013- Despite achieving substantial savings in costs including loss of staff over the past year, and preparing for £7m of budget reductions over the next five years, you continue to target services on the most vulnerable in the community.

2: The Culture of the Organisation

Criterion 2 self-assessment Strong

Criterion 2 outcome Successful

You demonstrate a strong commitment to customer focus and this is apparent across the full range of services observed during the assessment. You have a well trained and motivated staff who treat customers with respect and dignity. There were two elements (**2.2.3 and 2.2.4**) **not considered fully met** at this time.

Update 2011- You continue to emphasise your commitment to customer focus in service delivery and ensure all customer groups are treated fairly. However, the assessor felt you still have some way to go to gauge Team commitment through your performance management system (**element 2.2.3**) and demonstrating that you involve front-line staff in developing policies and service planning (**element 2.2.4**). As a result these **two elements remain partially compliant** with the Standard.

Update 2012- While elements **2.2.3 and 2.2.4 remain partially compliant** with the Standard, you have made substantial improvements in a number of areas within this Criterion. There is no doubt about the corporate commitment to customer focus, but equally front-line staff demonstrate a considerable empathy towards customers and are friendly and polite in their approach. **Element 2.2.2 now considered to merit Compliance Plus.**

Update 2013- No progress has been made towards complying with Element 2.2.3. However, while there are still challenges in communicating with 26 Stations across a wide geographical area, you have made efforts to better involve and engage front-line staff resulting in **Element 2.2.4 now complying fully** with the Standard.

3: Information and Access

Criterion 3 self-assessment Strong
Criterion 3 outcome Successful

You have an excellent range of information for both existing and potential customers which you provide through a variety of channels appropriate to the needs and preferences of the diverse community you serve. Evidence that the recently improved web site meets user needs was not available resulting in element 3.2.3 being assessed partially compliant. Your partnership working is seen as a major strength and appears much appreciated by customers although there was some evidence of confusion resulting in element 3.4.2 being assessed as partially compliant. On a more positive note your support for the wider community is considered to merit **compliance plus (element 3.4.3)**

Update 2011- Performance in both elements previously judged to be partially compliant with the Standard has improved and as a result **all elements now comply fully** with this Criterion. Furthermore, your range of partnerships and scope of these arrangements merit the award of **Compliance Plus for element 3.4.1.**

Update 2012- In addition to your continuing development of improved choice of access channels you have also developed further the range of co-provided services through a wider range of community and statutory partnerships.

Update 2013- You continue to invest in partnership working including the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and Community Safety Partnerships.

4: Delivery

Criterion 4 self-assessment Strong

Criterion 4 outcome Successful

You have sophisticated and mature systems in place to ensure you consistently provide high quality services and achieve your service aims and objectives. While you are meeting key departmental targets and standards the evidence available suggests you have not met some performance targets resulting in element 4.1.2 being assessed as partially met. Furthermore element 4.3.6 was not considered fully met at this time although we were assured that this was an administrative matter and could be overcome without difficulty.

Update 2011- Element 4.1.2 remains partially compliant as some performance indicators are still not fully met although most of these are now within 10% of target. All other elements within this Criterion fully comply with the Standard.

Update 2012- All elements now fully compliant with the requirements of the Standard. You consult widely in the development of services to ensure they meet the needs of customers. You deliver these services measured and monitored against a range of challenging standards. You constantly benchmark services against other Fire and Rescue Services.

Update 2013- You continue to perform strongly when measured against all Elements within this Criterion.

5: Timeliness and Quality of Service

Criterion 5 self-assessment Strong

Criterion 5 outcome Successful

Although two elements (5.1.1 and 5.1.2) were assessed as partially compliant this should not suggest that your Service provides other than an excellent level of customer service which is greatly appreciated by the majority of users.

Update 2011- Your new Service Charter and Standards brochure details comprehensive standards for timeliness and quality of customer services and thus ensures **all elements in this Criterion now fully comply** with the Standard.

Update 2012- You continue to deliver high quality services to your publicised standards and your performance now compares well with comparable organisations.

Update 2013- While the full impact of savings required to meet budget constraints have yet to be fully felt, the latest statistics available indicate that your Service continues to compare well with similar services.