



East Sussex Fire Authority

Statement of Operational Assurance 2016/17

July 2017



East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Government is committed to reducing red tape and eliminating bureaucracy. This freedom and flexibility comes with the requirement that we need to ensure 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 Statement of Operational Assurance.
- 1.3 In line with the requirement to streamline, 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. Our draft accounts for 2016/17, along with our audited or final accounts for previous years, are available on our website via the link below. .
- 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. The external auditor's Audit Results Report is also published in September each year and can be found using the link below.
- 2.4 For more information please see the financial pages of our website in the 'About us' section of our website or follow this link. <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/financial-information/>

3. Governance Arrangements

- 3.1 We are also required by Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 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. The AGS is reviewed annually by the Scrutiny and Audit Panel and a copy of the report they received for 2016/17 can be found at:

<http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/east-sussex-fire-authority/scrutiny-audit-panel/>

- 3.2 Copies of our AGS for 2016/17, together with statements from previous years can be found in the 'About us' section of our website on the 'East Sussex Fire Authority' page, under 'Corporate Governance'. Or alternatively follow this link

<http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/east-sussex-fire-authority/corporate-governance/>

4. Data Transparency

- 4.1 We comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. This means that certain data (such as details of procurement and the constitution) must be made available to the public and we do this via our website. We also provide data on the democratic running of the local authority including the constitution, panel minutes, decision-making processes, records of decisions and Freedom of Information requests.
- 4.2 For more information please see our website under About Us or follow the link below,

<http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/>

5. Operational Assurance – Legislative Framework 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") which requires the promotion of fire safety; preparation for fire-fighting; protecting people and property from fires; rescuing people from road traffic collisions; and dealing with other emergencies such as flooding or terrorist attack.

Further details can be viewed by following the link below:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/pdfs/ukpga_20040021_en.pdf

- 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.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/preparation-and-planning-for-emergencies-responsibilities-of-responder-agencies-and-others>

- 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).

- 5.1.4 A cross-service Business Continuity Group oversees the Service's responsibilities in relation to business continuity and this is chaired by a member of the Corporate Management Team.

- 5.1.5 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.

Further details on how we plan for emergencies can be found here:

<http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/planning-for-emergencies/>

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 IRMP 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. A copy of the current IRMP can be accessed by following this link:

<http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/community-risk-management/integrated-risk-management-planning/>

- 5.2.3 We incorporate Integrated Risk Management within our Medium Term Financial Plan to show the public the extent of the resources provided by the Fire Authority; the type of work we undertake; and where the future direction lies in terms of a reducing budget and the possibility of more demands being placed on services. In order to meet the savings target a number of proposals were agreed by the Fire Authority in 2014 in order to meet budget constraints as part of our 'Changing the Service, Shaping our Future' programme. These have now been delivered or alternative proposals agreed.

More information can be found on our website follow the link in the 'About us' section to 'Changing the Service'. The following link provides all of the relevant information regarding 'Changing the Service' proposals: <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/changing-the-service/>

- 5.2.4 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.

5.3 Framework Report

- 5.3.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to lay a report before Parliament every two years, the last one was in July 2016, on the extent to which fire and rescue authorities are acting in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

- 5.3.2 The latest report stated that: The Home Secretary is satisfied that all are compliant; however there were some areas where practice could be strengthened and the Home Office will liaise with fire and rescue authorities to explore where further guidance in relation to this would be valuable.

More information on IRMP can be on our website: www.esfrs.org/about-us/community-risk-management/integrated-risk-management-planning/

- 5.3.3 For more information please see the 'Planning for Emergencies section of our website: <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/planning-for-emergencies/#>

5.4 **Mutual Aid**

- 5.4.1 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.
- 5.4.2 Under a section 16 Agreement with West Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire Authority provides a mobilising function in order for West Sussex County Council to discharge their functions under the Fire & Rescue Services Act.
- 5.4.3 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.
- 5.4.4 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.
- 5.4.5 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. We also undertake operational debriefs of any large scale incidents that we attend within East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove, as well as fully engaging with any national level debriefs for incidents that we have attended under the National Mutual Assistance Protocol. Lessons learnt from these debriefing events are fed back into the planning process as part of the review of our emergency plans.
- 5.4.6 The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles, JESIP, is a program that has delivered joint command training to commanders from the three emergency services in order to improve the way we work together at operational incidents with the aim of improving the outcomes for the general public and the organisation. Further work is ongoing to fully embed the principles into all our systems and procedures and to test and exercise jointly in realistic environments.
- 5.4.7 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 continue to support Kent FRS in assisting with the rescue of large animals. A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and allows for a charging process that ensures cost recovery for such incidents over the border. We also assist other emergency services at any other incident where additional resources are required. This aspect of our work has recently been extended with the introduction of a Memorandum of Understanding with Sussex Police that enables our crews to assist the police with search activities.

- 5.4.8 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 SRF 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.
- 5.4.9 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, 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. As well as being utilised in East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove this team can be mobilised to any national flooding incidents. The team has not been mobilised out of county during the term of this report.
- 5.4.10 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 52 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 and 46 HVPs, with seven being located in the South East region. One has been allocated to us and is based at Hove Fire Station. As well as being utilised in East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove the HVP and crews can be mobilised to national flooding incidents. The team has not been mobilised out of county during the term of this report.
- 5.4.11 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 fire-fighter safety. National guidance has been reviewed and incorporated into our current system to ensure that we continue to provide our fire-fighters with the most appropriate information to enable them to undertake their role in as safe a manner as possible.

5.5 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

- 5.5.1 In enforcing the Order, we recognise that ownership and understanding of responsibilities is vital and as such, we have grown our “Business Engagement” role and provide a centrally based Business Engagement lead officer with lead officers also based in each of our three Business Safety Hubs. Typically this involves identifying opportunities to engage and explain the requirements of the Order at face-to-face events, with supporting material available on our internet site. Recently, through a Business Rates funded initiative, the Service has provided a “Safer Business Training” scheme <http://www.esfrs.org/business-safety/safer-businesses-training-programme/> to further support this work.
- 5.5.2 Following a number of recent fires in premises housing vulnerable occupants we have recognised the need to provide targeted advice and support around emergency evacuation plans and training. We have therefore employed a professional media company to work with us to produce an educational DVD which when complete, will be widely distributed.
- 5.5.3 We actively supported CFA Business safety Week 5 – 11 September 2016
- 5.5.4 We have promoted the Smoke Alarm and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 <http://www.esfrs.org/business-safety/new-laws-for-landlords/>
- 5.5.5 We provide practical advice and support on Fire Risk Assessments and have created a downloadable log book as well as other useful resources <http://www.esfrs.org/business-safety/fire-risk-assessment/>
- 5.5.6 We highlight the benefits of Primary Authority <http://www.esfrs.org/business-safety/primary-authority-scheme/>
- and are looking to promote opportunities for the Service to provide partnership advice
- 5.5.7 We continue to promote the findings from our fire investigations so that risk assessments better identify sources of ignition and the benefits of active and passive protection <http://www.esfrs.org/black-museum/>
- 5.5.8 The Service has recently provided match funding to secure the installation of sprinkler systems in premises identified as posing a particular risk to occupants and / or firefighters and we promote sprinklers where opportunities present themselves <http://www.esfrs.org/business-safety/sprinklers/>

One such site is the Orangery Extra care Scheme which is a new purpose built extra care housing development in Bexhill. A residential sprinkler system was installed throughout the premise as part of the initial construction phase.

Another site where sprinklers have been installed is at Somerset Point in Brighton. This is a sheltered housing block consisting of 72 flats across 13 floors.

More detail on both these installations can be found by following the link below,

<http://www.esfrs.org/business-safety/sprinklers/>

5.5.9 We recognise that in exceptional cases; where supported by evidence and it being in the public interest, there is a need to use an appropriate sanction where fire safety standards have not been maintained by a responsible person. Not only has this Service developed tools to ensure a consistent and appropriate use of prosecution and Simple Caution as sanctions, we have also developed the use of Informal Cautions, which CFOA are looking to adopt nationally <http://www.esfrs.org/business-safety/business-safety-enforcement/>

5.5.10 We recognise that Prohibition, whilst being necessary in cases of serious and imminent danger, can impact significantly on business. We have therefore developed a “Prohibition Scoring Tool” to better ensure a consistent consideration of all relevant factors.

5.6 Prevention of Future Deaths

5.6.1 Following recent changes in the Coroners Rules, we have highlighted to our Fire Investigation Officers the need to draw the Coroner’s attention to any matters where we consider that similar circumstances may occur in the future that could lead to subsequent further deaths. This has already resulted in a Regulation 28 letter highlighting the dangers of fire in certain types of clothing. At the same time that these matters were drawn to the coroner’s attention, this Service also took part in a number of media events following national concern over children’s fancy dress and fire.

5.6.2 Our Black Museum site also highlights fatal fires and includes lessons learnt with the issues around clothing highlighted under the following case <http://www.esfrs.org/black-museum/all-the-black-museum-cases/vulnerable-people-and-clothing-fires/>

5.7 Health & Safety Assurance

5.7.1 "ESFRS takes the health, safety and well-being of all our staff seriously.

We will continue to ensure that it is considered as a priority and as part of the way we do things, rather than being viewed merely as an add-on legal obligation.

During 2015/16 the service invited representatives from Hereford and Worcestershire FRS to undertake a focused health and safety peer review. In addition, following an event at our training centre a full investigation and action plan to improve arrangements and policy implementation has been put in place and we are working closely with all representative bodies to monitor the continuous improvement and delivery of these plans. Many required actions have been completed and work is ongoing to complete the remaining ones.

During 2016 the scrutiny and audit role of the corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee (HSWC) has been reviewed with revised terms of reference, aims, objectives and priorities, as well as redesigning the structure that sits underneath the HSWC to ensure delivery. The associated meetings are now established and starting to deliver against their aims and objectives. We will keep these new arrangements under review to ensure they are effective as part of our governance arrangements."

5.8 Business Continuity.

5.8.1 ESFRS will take all reasonable steps to ensure that in the event of a service interruption, agreed Mission Critical Services (MCSs) will be maintained and normal services restored, as soon as reasonably possible. To ensure that this happens, it is Service policy to have in place robust business continuity recovery plans that are regularly reviewed and tested, and key staff appropriately trained to manage these procedures.

5.8.2 For a short-term disruption, Directorate Heads will lead on recovery arrangements. For long term/corporate level disruptions, a formal Emergency Management Team (EMT) will be stood up to manage the recovery; this will be overseen by a Strategic level manager. An EMT exercise took place in March 2016 and the lessons learnt are being incorporated into a revision of the business continuity plans. Further training and exercises are planned throughout 2017.

5.8.3 ESFRS Business Continuity Management process aligns to the requirements of the ISO 22301 Standard.

5.9 Incident feedback

5.9.1 The Service continues to look at methods to improve operational assurance. A new Incident Debriefing & Review process has recently been implemented based on the College of Policing system. This will allow for a more consistent and effective review of operational performance at incidents and will ensure operational learning is monitored and audited. In addition, we have started to roll out operational assurance at Level 1 incidents through utilising RDS Support Officers and Locality Managers to respond to incidents and provide a monitoring and auditing role. Using a similar system as the Incident Debriefing & Review process, this monitoring will ensure that the application

of policy and procedures is effective and that equipment is fit for purpose. The Service recognises that there is more work to do to ensure this approach is working effectively and can be rolled out to other work-groups across the Service area.

5.10 Operations Committee

5.10.1 To further support a robust operational assurance culture, the Corporate Management Team has recently agreed to the introduction of an Operations Committee. This committee will be chaired by the ACFO and will operate at strategic level and consider corporate operational assurance, operational readiness, performance, policy, practice and training. This will ensure that the Service is managing the oversight and delivery of all its responsibilities in respect of emergency response operations and has the necessary systems and policies to ensure adoption of good practice and compliance with statutory responsibilities. Furthermore, the Operations Committee will review operational performance including the outcomes of incident debriefs and reviews and the outcomes from the station audit and inspection programme.

5.11 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

5.11.1 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.

5.11.2 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.

5.12 The Localism Act 2011

5.12.1 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.

5.12.2 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.

- 5.12.3 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. In May 2014, the Authority's Policy & Resources Panel endorsed an amendment to the existing policy for attendance to automatic fire detection systems. This allows for a standardised pre-determined attendance across Sussex in line with the regional ways of working. This change to policy went live on 1st July 2015. The change will be monitored for a period of time to determine if this action has had any significant effect and a review will be completed. This review will include the feasibility of introducing a charge for such calls in the future.
- 5.12.4 Work has also begun to examine the opportunities to reduce the number of emergency responses we make to defective lifts. The premise owner is responsible for the management of all utilities within a building and this includes lifts. Sufficient maintenance and servicing programmes should be in place so as to limit the number of breakdowns and thus the number of responses we get called to. The piece of work will include educational input with owners and if this is not successful consideration will be given to introducing a charge for responding.
- 5.12.5 In addition, the Service has also renegotiated a memorandum of understanding with Kent & Medway Fire Authority which sees the Service undertaking large animal rescues on behalf of Kent across a large area of Kent and for which the Service is able to charge.
- 5.12.6 Under section 38(1) of the Act we are required to prepare a Pay Policy Statement. The Authority is responsible for ensuring 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. . For more information please see the 'data transparency' web page under the 'Freedom of information' section under 'About us' on our website or alternatively use the following link. <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/publication-of-information/data-transparency/>

6. Improvements to service delivery during this year

- 6.1 A third Retained Duty system (RDS), Support Officer role has been created to build on the success of initial two introduced in Wealden and Rother Boroughs. The role will be utilised to support and assist managers of the Lewes Borough to deliver quality training, operational audit and assurance, along with regular exercises at risk venues across the Borough.

- 6.1.1 The introduction of the Station based assessment training plan has been successfully rolled out to all whole-time stations. This plan ensures all our staff are working on a rolling two year plan for training, incorporating e-learning packages and flexibility for managers. This plan ensures that Borough Commanders can actively monitor station based training and receive accurate up to date reports for individuals.
- 6.1.2 We have also introduced the Fire watch crewing module to the RDS fire stations. This module is designed to allow RDS firefighters to access the crewing remotely via mobile phones or computer. Changes to crewing are shown immediately and high-light whether appliances are on or off the run with the change. It gives the skills of firefighters, which allows for remote access and if required managers to mix crew from stations during large scale incidents or spare conditions. This adds to service resilience and also allows for closer scrutiny of agreed working hours, giving managers evidence to challenge should the need arise.
- 6.1.3 We have completed the roll out of the new Incident Command National operational guidance (NOG). This piece of work has been delivered to all operational incident commanders and firefighters across the service. It highlights the key areas of change in managing incidents effectively and safely and has been mandatory training for all ESFRS incident Commanders and Firefighters.
- 6.1.4 The Wealden and Eastbourne Borough have established a dedicated Road Safety Advisor role funded for one year. This role has been introduced due to the number of people killed and seriously injured on the Wealden Roads. Working with our partners this role has been able to develop a killed and seriously injured (KSI) plan with key deliverables around influencing driver behaviours. The Borough Commander works closely with Wealden District Council (WDC) and other partners and stakeholders to identify issues and areas of priority. The road safety group chaired by the Borough Commander report directly to the Wealden Safer Partnership and update monthly on outcomes and activities. A team of volunteers have been trained to work in local communities carrying out speed watch activities and other work, feeding directly into operation crackdown. Working with (WDC) as part of the behavioural insights team, a campaign of “we’re keeping an eye on you” has been developed and rolled out. A number of areas have been targeted to give driver information through road side boards. The Government’s own behavioural insights team are paying particular interest in this work as it has not been delivered anywhere else in the Country.
- 6.1.5 The Service’s Community Safety Department has developed a number of work streams during the last 12 months to further reduce the risk of death and injury within the community, including widening the remit of safe and well visits and the continued delivery of Safety in Action.
- 6.1.6 Assistive technology:
- Development of a cooker cut-off device - We have worked closely with a manufacturer to trial the concept and have encouraged social landlords to utilise the cut off device where there is a risk of cooking being left unattended, for instance with dementia sufferers and substance misusers.

- Wider use of linked smoke alarms in a Care Link lifeline system – We have worked collaboratively with the local County Council who fund in excess of 5,500 life line systems to train their assessors with fire risk assessment so that a linked smoke alarm can be included in the specification of a system that is recommended for installation where appropriate.
- 6.1.7 Safe and Well visits: A further development of the Home Safety Visit that provides a holistic approach to wellbeing and safety within the home. As well as identifying the usual risk factors including overloaded electric sockets, smoking risks, slips trips and falls the Safe & Well visit incorporates wider health and safety issues such as fuel poverty, cold homes, scam mail and links the client to local voluntary services such as befriending, library, meals and community transport where appropriate. These visits are undertaken by paid staff and target clients considered to be at high risk due to their vulnerability which would include the elderly, people living at home, those with lack of mobility or sensory issues.
- 6.1.8 In addition we have a cadre of uniformed community volunteers who are undertaking the same Safe & Well visits targeting clients who are considered to be at medium risk but expected to deteriorate over time. This innovative approach aims to reduce the likelihood of clients moving into high risk and truly reflects our preventative agenda.
- 6.1.9 Safer Business Training: Utilising funding from Business Rates pooling fund the Service offers a one day course to small and medium sized businesses to provide training and advice on risk assessments to assist businesses to comply with the legislation and ensure the continuing safety of their staff and customers. We are developing a second element of the course targeting business drivers to offer them assessment and training in defensive driving tactics to reduce the incidence of aggressive driving in commercial drivers and thereby also reduce the number of collisions.
- 6.1.10 Child Safety Equipment and home safety advice service: the Service has been awarded a two year contract by East Sussex Public Health to provide child safety equipment and home safety advice to a small number of families considered to be at high risk of accidental injury to children aged 0 – 2 years. East Sussex has a high number of admissions to hospital for accidental injuries to children and this contract sees the provision of safety gates, fire guards, blind cleats, bath mats and carbon monoxide alarms.
- 6.1.11 Road Safety: the Service chairs the East Sussex Road Safety Coordination Group, a county level collaboration of organisations involved in road safety including Sussex Police, East Sussex Highways and Public Health, the five Community Safety Partnerships, the Ambulance Trust, ESFRS and the Institute of Advanced Motorists. The group shares best practice and promulgates road safety campaigns and media messages to ensure that best practice is shared with the aim of reducing the high number of people killed and seriously injured on East Sussex roads.
- 6.1.12 Safety in Action (SIA): the Service now coordinates safety in action events across 4 of the 5 East Sussex Districts and supports SIA in the fifth which is still coordinated by a District Council. SIA provides the opportunity for every year 6 pupil to

experience dangerous or risky incidents in a controlled environment under the supervision of experts in the field. These scenarios include railway, personal safety, water risk, electricity, road safety, environmental dangers and fire. SIA has been assessed by RoSPA who have stated that the events provide lifelong high quality learning for children. The Service will be extending SIA to every primary school child in Brighton & Hove from 2017.

- 6.1.13 Water Safety: the Service has developed a water safety strategy to work collaboratively to help reduce the number of deaths and injuries associated with water. There were 129 drowning related deaths over the last 3 years making East Sussex one of the highest risk areas nationally. The strategy will see water safety being taught by our Education Officers during their classroom sessions in schools alongside fire station based activities.
- 6.1.14 Community Volunteers: Started in 2009 management of the ESFRS community volunteer scheme was brought in-house under Community Safety in 2016 which has allowed closer integration of volunteers with ESFRS staff resulting in volunteers becoming more fully integrated within the Service.
- 6.1.15 Collaboration with Sussex Police has seen joint branded volunteers supporting community safety in Eastbourne in a pilot that will be replicated across East Sussex with volunteers providing personal and crime safety advice in addition to fire safety advice for vulnerable groups including the elderly.
- 6.1.16 Information sharing: the Service has an information sharing agreement with East Sussex Adult Social Care & Health providing access to their database of clients to offer home safety visits to reduce risk within the home.
- 6.1.17 We are developing a similar arrangement with Clinical Commissioning Groups in East Sussex to provide home safety visits to GP clients at risk of unplanned admission to hospital, the NHS Trust responsible for mental health services and a tripartite arrangement with East Sussex Adult Social Care, Trading Standards and Sussex Police to identify potential victims of scams.
- 6.1.18 Troubled families: Our Education Team is developing wider links with the Troubled Family Teams in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove to contribute to their interaction with troubled families. The fire service has a unique brand that allows us to positively influence families and encourage sustained behavioural change.

7. Internal Audits and Assessments

- 7.1 East Sussex County Council's Internal Audit provides our internal audit service, independently assessing the effectiveness of our governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. Internal Audit supports the role of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel. An annual internal audit plan is agreed by the Scrutiny & Audit Panel following consultation between the Corporate Management Team and Internal Audit about the risk priorities and the results of this work is then reported back to the Panel. 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. The results of these internal audit reviews and the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion are reported to the Scrutiny and Audit Panel.

Operational Assessment

- 7.4.1 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. The assessment takes place every three years and our next assessment will take place in 2017. Information on our last assessment undertaken in January 2014 can be found in the 'About us' section of our website on the 'East Sussex Fire Authority' page, under 'Planning and Performance/ Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge'. Or alternatively follow this link <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/planning-performance/operational-assessment-fire-peer-challenge/>

Given 7.2.1 above, it should be noted however, that the Home Office are currently undertaking a consultation on the National Framework and are also reinstating a form of independent inspections of the fire and rescue services similar to those conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Exact details of these inspections and the format are still to be confirmed but may change the whole aspect of Operational Assessment. A full brief of the outcome will be provided in the next Statement of Operational Assurance.

7.2 Station Audits

7.3.1 The Station Audit 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 Audit process provides assurance that published internal guidance and adopted National Operational Guidance has been delivered, understood and implemented as well as ensuring compliance with Service policy on a range of managerial matters. Evidence is gathered through:

- 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.

7.3.2 A completed report is handed to the Borough or Station Commander on the day of the audit unless the performance is poor and a detailed training needs report is required. 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.

8. Policing and Crime Act – Partnership work and Collaboration

8.1.1 The Government remains committed to “finish the job of police reform”. The Policing and Crime Act will support the transformation of the fire and rescue service by:

- Enhancing local accountability of the fire and rescue service by enabling directly elected PCCs to take over the governance from Fire and Rescue Authorities where a local case is made.
- Driving efficiency and better value for money by facilitating closer collaboration between all three emergency services and maximising the ability of chief officers to make best use of their workforce.

8.1.2 A requirement of the Act is that the relevant FRA's should cooperate with the PCC in preparation of the proposal and provide any information the PCC might reasonably require. The Authority has agreed to cooperate accordingly.

8.2 Partnership working

8.2.1 The Authority is committed to partnership working and a great example of this is with the opening of Sussex House in Newhaven. This was a joint project that brings together the Service, Sussex Police and Lewes District Council in a shared premises.

- 8.2.2 The modern building includes a large open-plan shared office area with meeting rooms and a large community, training and briefing room, with lift access. There is also a gym which can be jointly used by all staff in the building, which is important for both staff well-being and fitness levels.
- 8.2.3 Lewes District Council and Sussex Police operate a shared reception on the ground-floor, which is open to the public Monday to Friday from 1000 – 1400hrs.
- 8.2.4 The project has had a focus on environmental matters. For example, there are green initiatives such as Photovoltaic Panels, generating electricity to reduce energy consumption, and low energy LED lighting throughout the building.
- 8.2.5 In addition, lighting is controlled by manual override switches but will automatically turn off if movement sensors are not activated after a period of time. All of these measures ensure that the future running costs of the building are reduced.
- 8.2.6 The collaborative approach to the project means that three previously outdated buildings can be sold, or reused, for alternative uses and the shared approach has meant more than £450k savings across the three partner agencies.
- 8.2.7 By the time this report is published the sale of the Eastbourne HQ will have been confirmed and staff working at that site will have been relocated to either, the new shared HQ with Sussex Police at Lewes, Eastbourne Fire station and Bexhill Fire station. As well as providing a modern and flexible working environment for many of our office based staff, this significant relocation and collaboration project will deliver a capital receipt which can be re-invested in our remaining buildings and a revenue saving of £150,000 per annum.

9. Performance Management

- 9.1 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 measure progress.
 - Identify and tackle poor performance.
 - Be accountable to our communities.
 - Help ensure we provide value for money.
- 9.2 The Corporate Management Team (CMT), of three Principal Officers, the Treasurer and five Assistant 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.
- 9.3 The service to the public is then delivered by two directorates, Service Planning & Assurance and Service Delivery, and their main responsibilities are:
- Service Planning & Assurance**
- Training & Assurance
 - Resources
 - Planning & Improvement

Service Delivery

- Safer Communities
- Human Resources & Organisational Development
- Operational Support & Resilience

9.4 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 risk and needs and the resources available to us.
- Our Annual Plan 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.

9.5 The start to effective performance management is business planning which translates high-level objectives into management actions linked to 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.

9.6 On a monthly basis performance results are produced by Borough and Station. 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.

9.7 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 2016/17 were:

- Of the 10,000 Home Safety Visits undertaken at least 90% should be delivered to our vulnerable community.
- Number of accidental fires in dwellings should reduce
- Ensuring accidental dwelling fires are confined to the room they started in on 94% of occasions.
- A 32% reduction in automatic fire alarms.
- The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence for all staff should not exceed 7.5 days.

- 9.8 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 latest version of which can be found at: <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/east-sussex-fire-authority/scrutiny-audit-panel/>. The following table shows our reductions in performance over the thirteen years from 2001/02 to 2016/17 and our performance from last year, 2016/17.

Table 1 – Performance results 2016/17

Summary	2001/02 Actual	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Provisional	Reduction since 2001/02 + / - %	Reduction from 2015/16 to 2016/17 + / - %
All fires, including chimney fires	5,352	1,971	2,048	-62%	4%
Accidental Dwelling Fires	783	554	539	-31%	-3%
Primary Fires (fires in properties of value or involve more than 5 fire engines)	2,821	1,187	1,180	-58%	-1%
Secondary Fires (fires in derelict buildings, grass, heath, railway, straw, fence, bins etc.)	2,321	660	736	-68%	11.5%
Deliberate Primary Fires	1,393	229	267	-81%	17%
Deliberate Road Vehicle Primary Fires	924	75	98	-89%	31%
Deliberate Primary Fires other than road vehicles	469	154	169	-64%	10%
Deliberate Secondary Fires	1,984	358	409	-79%	14%
All Non-Fatal Casualties	222	112		-100%	-100%
Non-Fatal Casualties excluding precautionary checks	152	45	35	-77%	-22%
False Alarms	5,962	4,290	4,552	-24%	6%
False Alarms due to Apparatus	-	3,078	3,171	-	3%
Malicious False Alarms	564	108	130	-77%	20%

- 9.9 Overall 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 fire-fighters 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 support and professional roles, all play a part in making our communities safer.
- 9.10 It should be noted that there has been an increase in several areas over the past year. These statistics reflect a national trend and work is currently underway, both nationally and locally, to determine the cause and reasons for this.
- 9.11 Further information on performance can be found in the 'About us' section of our website under 'Planning and Performance. Or alternatively follow this link <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/planning-performance/annual-plan/>

10. 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 communities we serve, 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 on-going work undertaken by both Internal and External Audit and other external assessments, we have reached the opinion that, overall, key systems are operating soundly and that there are no fundamental control weaknesses.

It should be noted that future Statements of Operational Assurance may be presented in a different format and we are awaiting further detail from the Home Office regarding their requirements.

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

Date

Date

Councillor

Dawn Whittaker

Chair of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel

Interim Chief Fire Officer