

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Standards and Governance Committee

Item 8

14 June 2016

Annual Governance Statement 2015 – 2016

Report by the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority publishes its Annual Governance Statement each year and it is accompanied by the Annual Statement of Accounts. The Annual Governance Statement is a statutory document that is produced by every Local Authority following a review by each organisation of the existing governance arrangements and will include an action plan to address governance issues of particular significance.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the content of the Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 is noted and that the report is approved by the Committee.
- 2.2 That the Service's approach to addressing the areas identified for improvement is supported.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Annual Governance Statement is produced in accordance with CIPFA SOLACE principles. Whilst it is a statutory document there is no mandated format and the level of detail described will vary between different local authority organisations. However the objective of the document should be to clearly and plainly explain the Authority's governance mechanisms and plans to improve on existing governance. By using the six CIPFA SOLACE principles the report will be complete in its content and provide assurance to the Authority and to the public that the internal governance mechanisms are fit for purpose.
- 3.2 The Annual Governance Statement normally describes activities that take place within the specified financial year ending on 31 March. However, on instances there are occasions where the described activities may go up to the period that the Statement of Accounts is signed off by the External Auditors.

4 Future

- 4.1 This Annual Governance Statement covers the financial year 2015 – 2016 and was written prior to the outcomes of the Members' review of Authority Governance; therefore the findings of that review will not be included within the Annual Governance Statement. Neither will the result of the review of internal (Service)

governance as recommended by the 2015 Peer Review be included. These improvements will be reflected in the Annual Governance Statement for 2016 – 2017.

- 4.2 With the move of Fire and Rescue to the Home Office the requirement for a robust and clear Annual Governance Statement is still needed. The Annual Governance Statement scope may alter, however the importance of providing assurance on our internal control mechanisms to our communities and our organisational performance will remain unchanged.

5 Service approach to the report

- 5.1 The Annual Governance Statement is produced by the Performance Review Manager, who is the focal point for organisational performance within the Knowledge Management Department and this function is subject to internal quality control. It has been approved by the Directors Group with the specific input of the Chief Finance Officer and the Director of Professional Services. It also includes input and review by Internal Audit.

6 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives

- 6.1 In reviewing our existing governance arrangements and identifying areas to be improved within the next financial year, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority will remain accountable for making Hampshire a safer place to live and work and the Service will continue to fulfil its mission of making Hampshire safer.

7 People Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation.

8 Resource implications

- 8.1 There are no specific resource implications as the actions associated with each area for improvement or further consideration will be included within routine business planning activities for the Authority and Service.

9 Background papers

- 9.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

HFRA Annual Governance Statement 2015 - 2016

Note: The list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.