



**Staffordshire Fire
and Rescue Service**

Statement of Assurance

2020/21



www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter please **contact us**.

Polish

Jeżeli chciałby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

French

Si vous souhaitez obtenir ce document dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format ou si vous avez besoin des services d'un interprète, veuillez nous contacter.

Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੀਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੱਸੋ।

Arabic

إذا أردت هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، أو إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات مترجم، فنرجو أن تقوم بالاتصال بنا.

Chinese

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Farsi

اگر این مدرک را به زبانی دیگر یا در فرمتی دیگر می‌خواهید و یا اگر احتیاج به سرویس مترجم دارید، لطفاً با ما تماس بگیرید

Foreword

Welcome to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's annual Statement of Assurance for 2020-2021 which details our performance and the financial, governance and operational arrangements in place for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Our new **Safety Plan 2020-2024** was published in the summer of 2020, setting out the priorities for the Service over the next four years, influenced by the views of over 1,600 residents, businesses, partners and our people. We promised we would be open about our plans, making sure they are clear and easy to understand and report regularly on our progress in a way which is transparent and easy to scrutinise. This Statement of Assurance reflects on the progress made by the Service over the past 12 months in taking these priorities forward and is designed to provide our people, partners and our local communities with the reassurance that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service will not compromise on our commitment to protecting our local communities from fire and other emergencies, reducing risk and maintaining firefighter safety.

This Statement of Assurance also reflects upon the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our activities and resources. The first national lockdown began 23 March 2020, so for much of the period of this report the Service was operating within the restrictions imposed by Government, adapting our ways of working to ensure we

continued to deliver our services in the most efficient and effective way, whilst keeping our people and our communities safe and well.

The Service was praised in a report by HMICFRS following its inspection of how each of the 45 fire and rescue services in England responded to the challenges of tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. This report is a real testimony to the ongoing hard work and commitment shown by colleagues in what continues to be very challenging circumstances. We are particularly pleased that the inspectors recognised all the additional work our people have been doing to support the NHS and the most vulnerable in our communities during the pandemic and that colleagues have been praised for their consistent adaptability to change and embracing new ways of working in these unprecedented times.

Overall we are satisfied that during 2020-2021, the Authority's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements were adequate and operating effectively and that our business has been conducted in accordance with proper standards and law and that public money was properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively. Additionally, we are satisfied that the Authority has done everything within its power to comply with the requirements of the **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**.



Becci Bryant
Chief Fire Officer



Ben Adams
Staffordshire
Commissioner

 **0300 330 1000**

Introduction

We are required by the **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England** to provide an Annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters to enable our communities, Government, local authorities and partners to make a valid assessment of our performance and governance arrangements. This Statement of Assurance sets out the financial, governance and response arrangements that the Staffordshire Commissioner had in place for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The aim of producing this statement is to provide our communities with clear information regarding the performance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) against the priorities set out in our community risk management plan – which we call our **Safety Plan 2020-2024**. We will also take this opportunity to talk about our future plans.

We have written this document in accordance with the guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on **Statements of Assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England**, which suggests that where relevant information that is clear, accessible and user friendly is available within existing documents, extracts or links to these documents may be included within a Statement of Assurance. This Statement includes extracts or links to key documents, or other sources of information, where relevant.



Our Priorities

This report highlights how, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has progressed each of the four priorities set out in our **Safety Plan 2020-2024** and meets the requirements of the Annual Statement of Assurance, confirming the adequacy of arrangements for effective management of financial, governance and operational matters for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. **The Annual Service Delivery plan 2020-2021** links directly to our Safety Plan and set out the priority activities for the year.

1 Prevention and early intervention

We aim to develop a detailed community risk profile of Staffordshire, so that we can use our resources in the most efficient and effective way.

2 Protecting Staffordshire and its people

We aim to reduce and remove risks in our communities using a combination of prevention, protection and response activities and help make Staffordshire a safer place to live, work and visit.

3 Public confidence

We aim to report regularly on our progress and communicate openly about our plans so that, they are clearly understood, meet our legal duties and provide assurance to the public in a way which is transparent and easy to scrutinise.

4 Service reform

We aim to develop and support a diverse, healthy and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our service.

Our Progress

1 Priority 1: Prevention and early intervention

To prevent fires and respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies we said we would:

-  Work together with our partners across the county to share information and create a more detailed understanding of the risks to our communities and identify the people and properties most at risk
-  Prioritise these risks to ensure our activities have the most positive impact on community safety
-  Develop targeted activities to make the most efficient use of our resources and minimise our impact on the environment
-  Work with partners to educate our communities and share goals to reduce duplication and inefficiencies in the public sector

What we have done and what we plan to do

During the summer we launched our Don't be Blamed for the Flames campaign to deter would-be fire setters from deliberately setting fires and to reduce accidental grass fires caused by disposable barbeques, cigarettes, campfires and litter. Partner organisations including Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and National Trust displayed campaign banners at key locations including Cannock Chase, Chasewater and Staffordshire Moorlands to reinforce our message and remind people to take extra care when enjoying their time in the countryside.

As we were unable to deliver our educational programmes in person due to COVID-19 restrictions, we developed a virtual Safe+Sound programme for children aged 7 to

11 which was broadcast every week via www.learnliveuk.com/safesound (and on demand), consisting of short workshops designed to teach children life skills to help keep themselves, their families, friends and carers.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, in the autumn, our family festival went online for the first time via Facebook with interactive sessions and presentations on a range of topics including fire investigation, BA maintenance, the Safe+Sound pod and Kai the fire dog.

Working with the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership we created a 30 minute Safe+Sound Winter Driving Special, broadcast during national Road Safety Week in November which focussed on a range of topics including winter vehicle checks and driving in poor weather to provide motorists with essential tips for driving safely during the

colder, darker months with contributions from Staffordshire Police, Highways England and Network Rail.

Our electrical safety campaign "Watts the Danger" launched in November and ran over the festive period. The campaign launched in the run up to Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales to highlight the various ways residents can protect themselves from suffering a fire caused by the many electrical items used around the home. It is the second biggest cause of fires in the home and with more people working from home during the pandemic there has never been a greater need for residents to be aware of the dangers.





Our Risk Planning team has been reviewing and revising the profile of risks across Staffordshire to identify those most at risk of being injured (requiring hospital treatment) or dying in a fire to help us improve the targeting of our prevention and education activities. This data has been used to develop our new community fire safety message for this year, which is living alone. Living alone is actually a greater risk factor than being elderly and is only topped by not having a working smoke alarm. We propose to launch a new campaign in summer that will aim to make single people in the 45 plus age category safer in their home from fire.



Our Progress

2 Priority 2: Protecting Staffordshire and its people

To protect our people, buildings, the environment and reduce local risk we said we would:

-  Continue to modify and develop our activities to embrace the changing needs of the county and use advances in technology and techniques to ensure our response to emergencies is efficient and effective
-  Contribute to building communities which are fit for the future - resilient, healthy and sustainable
-  Contribute to ensuring that buildings in Staffordshire are safe for residents and visitors for generations to come
-  Ensure that we have the capability to meet new and emerging risks from incidents that may involve flooding, wildfire, terrorism or supporting other emergency services

What we have done and what we plan to do

The Service is currently working through the recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry. Phase 1 and making great progress with installing sprinklers in residential blocks across the county. Our aim was to have sprinklers retrofitted in all residential buildings of five floors or more by 2026 and we are well on our way to achieving that goal with installations having been completed in 12 blocks in the county. There are also discussions and commitment from other housing providers and associations throughout Staffordshire to have these systems installed in a further 22 blocks.

As part of our work relating to the action plan resulting from the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1, recommendations in relation to tall buildings, we developed a presentation for operational crews focusing on evacuation. As part of the

development of tactical plans for dealing with incidents at tall buildings consideration must be given to how an evacuation will take place. Moving from a stay-put policy to one which involves the evacuation of large numbers of residents is a complex matter and it is crucial that incident commanders and crews understand the way in which this can take place and what considerations should form part of this decision.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the work of the Protection Team during the course of the year. Visits to establish changes to risks in premises were unable to take place during the first lockdown. As the lockdown restrictions began to be implemented, Protection carried out an exercise to ensure premises housing vulnerable people had essential fire safety measures in place. There were 341 businesses engaged via telephone during this period.

Our fire safety inspectors continued to carry out full in-person safety audits as part of our High Risk Inspection Programme, or following a complaint or fire, to allow us to fulfil our regulatory responsibilities. This work was undertaken whilst also respecting both the risks and restrictions created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A telephone audit form and procedures were developed to allow in depth audits to take place remotely. Remote audits were introduced in September and this process has been fully embedded into our protection plans in order to ensure continued fire safety compliance.

A key element to our fire safety and Provision of Operational Risk Information work is training for our operational crews and we are examining the options for some bespoke training to be procured into the Service. Our fire safety officers have delivered elements of training to watches over the last 12 months and this additional training will enhance and build on that already delivered.

In 2020 the Home Office introduced the new Fire Safety Bill, in an effort to improve fire safety in buildings in England and Wales. The Fire Safety Bill will see elements of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations delivered aims to minimise fire risks by ensuring that they are properly managed.




The Building Safety Bill, published in July 2020 is expected to come into force in late 2021. It is anticipated that the Bill will deliver significant change in both the regulatory framework and industry culture, creating a more accountable system. These pieces of legislation are going to see a revised role for our Service in respect of building safety and we need to ensure we are prepared for the changes and increases in demand for our involvement.



Our Progress

3 Priority 3: Public confidence

To maintain public confidence and trust in the service we said we would:

-  Ensure plans and resources are in place to provide a flexible efficient and resilient response to emergency incidents
-  Consult with our communities and listen to our people when developing our plans and services
-  Provide evidence that our activities are based on a recognised need and are targeted where they are needed most
-  Adopt a transparent and easily understood approach to planning and reporting throughout the Service

What we have done and what we plan to do

We wanted our communities to help us to shape, improve and transform our prevention, protection and response activities to make Staffordshire safer, meet the challenges of reduced public sector funding and reflect the changing demands and risks placed on the Service. We asked our people, our partners and our communities what our priorities should be and this feedback helped us to shape our new **Safety Plan 2020-2024** which was launched in the summer of 2020.

We promised we would be open about our plans, making sure they are clear and easy to understand and, reporting regularly on our progress in a way which is transparent and

easy to scrutinise. In September 2020, the Service Management Board approved the development and use of a new performance-reporting framework by which the Service will monitor service delivery and progress against the **Safety Plan 2020-2024**. This new approach will provide a more coherent and streamlined process and **meeting structure**, enabling the Service and the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office, via the Service Delivery, Performance Assurance and Strategic Governance Boards, to monitor performance and gain assurance that the Service is meeting its strategic objectives.

Performance reporting needs to present the measures in a clear simple way, which allows readers to see the direction of travel and understand the Service's interpretation of

our progress towards desired outcomes. This single report and integrated approach will contain sufficient quantitative detail using Statistical Process Control (SPC) charts to demonstrate rolling trends and direction of travel, and well as a narrative of explanation, interpretation and actions based on the findings. Benchmarking will be used against previous results, generally using a three-year

trend, to encourage improved performance, support change and to make performance comparisons.






These reports will form the basis of future Statement of Assurances demonstrating our commitment to having a transparent and easily understood approach to planning and reporting throughout the Service.



Our Progress

4 Priority 4: Service reform

To ensure we are effective, efficient and able to transform the Service to meet the challenges we face we said we would:

-  Invest in our people by providing them with the right equipment, training and skills to keep them safe, encourage innovation and inspire our future leaders
-  Continue to strive to improve the services we provide
-  Be honest and open, encouraging people to be themselves and treat each other with kindness and respect
-  Promote a positive and supportive culture committed to improving the health, fitness and wellbeing of our people
-  Work with our communities and partners to improve the diversity of our workforce

What we have done and what we plan to do

The Service’s twelfth new advanced technology fire engine is now in operation in Leek. A further four will be delivered in the coming months for use at Sandyford, Tamworth and Newcastle. Our crews were involved throughout the development of the new vehicles, which offer advanced technology, functional protection and smart stowage solutions allowing for much more efficient use of space.

The selection process for our new whole-time firefighter course took place in the summer, with almost 175 candidates taking part in the assessments. A huge amount of time and effort ensured that the tests were conducted safely in a COVID-19 secure manner. The first cohort completed their training in April 2021, with a second whole-time and an on-

call recruits’ course scheduled to begin later this year. We also ran an assessment process for current and future Station Managers. We continue to encourage our people to sign up to our **High potential development programme**. The aim of this programme is to identify and prepare people for roles as senior leaders in the fire and rescue service.

As part of delivering our **Digital Strategy** we switched to a new virtual desktop solution - this has already paid dividends, enabling many of our people to work from home during lockdown and since, improving flexible ways of working and enabling our teams to stay connected and communicate with each other. The way in which we are working is changing in many ways and we are working with our people and representative bodies to review and develop our flexible working arrangements.

During the course of the pandemic we implemented various control measures to ensure staff safety, ranging from social distancing, hygiene arrangements and the provision of PPE. We wanted to ensure that our workforce was prepared, protected and fit for work so we encouraged people to have the flu vaccination and enabled them to re-claim a contribution to the cost.

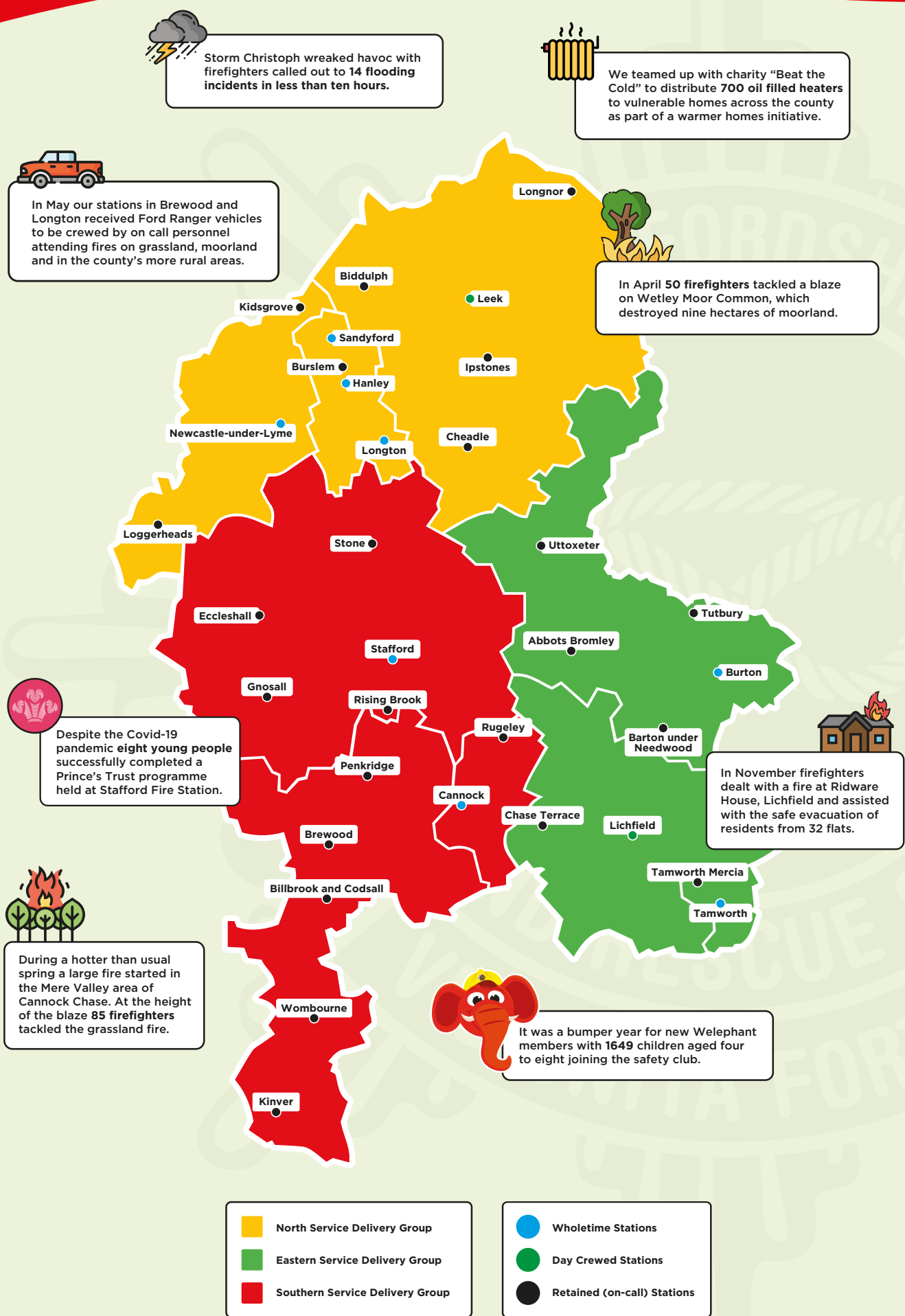
We invited our people to contribute to the Service’s response to the National Fire Chief’s Council/Local Government Association’s draft Core Code of Ethics for the Fire and Rescue Service which is being developed in response to a recommendation contained within the HMICFRS **State of Fire Report**. There are some very clear links between our own cultural message and the core code. In addition we have a range of policies which cover aspects such as social media, officer/elected member protocols, hospitality registers and within our procurement work we examine the ethical

behaviour of any company we may buy goods or services from.

The Service joined over 30 leading regional figures to appear in the NHS’s mental health video campaign ‘You Are Not Alone’, led by North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust in collaboration with Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust/University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust, to deliver a message of support to the communities of Staffordshire during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also working with Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to provide some early access to mental health support for our people.



Your Service



Scope of Responsibility

Since 1 August 2018, the Staffordshire Commissioner has been responsible for the governance of the Service, in addition to overseeing Staffordshire Police. The Commissioner is elected by the public to hold the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable to account and ensure local fire and rescue and police services are efficient and effective. The Commissioner also handles complaints and conduct matters in relation to the Chief Fire Officer.

Corporate governance is about how the Commissioner ensures the right things are being done in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. The Commissioner is responsible for ensuring that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service conducts its business in accordance with the law and proper standards; has effective arrangements in place to identify and manage risk, secures continuous improvements in the way it operates and delivers its services and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively to meet the needs our communities across Staffordshire.

The Commissioner is responsible for approving the Service's community risk management plan, which we call our Safety Plan. In the summer of 2020, the Commissioner approved our new **Safety Plan 2020-2024** which set out the Service's strategic vision, priorities and objectives for the next four years and considers how we will best respond to and improve the services we deliver to our communities across Staffordshire.

The Commissioner has also fully satisfied the duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the functions of the Service are delivered, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging these overall responsibilities, the Staffordshire Commissioner maintained responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Scrutiny and Performance Management

A **Fire Governance Framework** is in place which enables the Commissioner to monitor, scrutinise, support and challenge the Service's performance against the priorities set out in our Safety Plan and consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

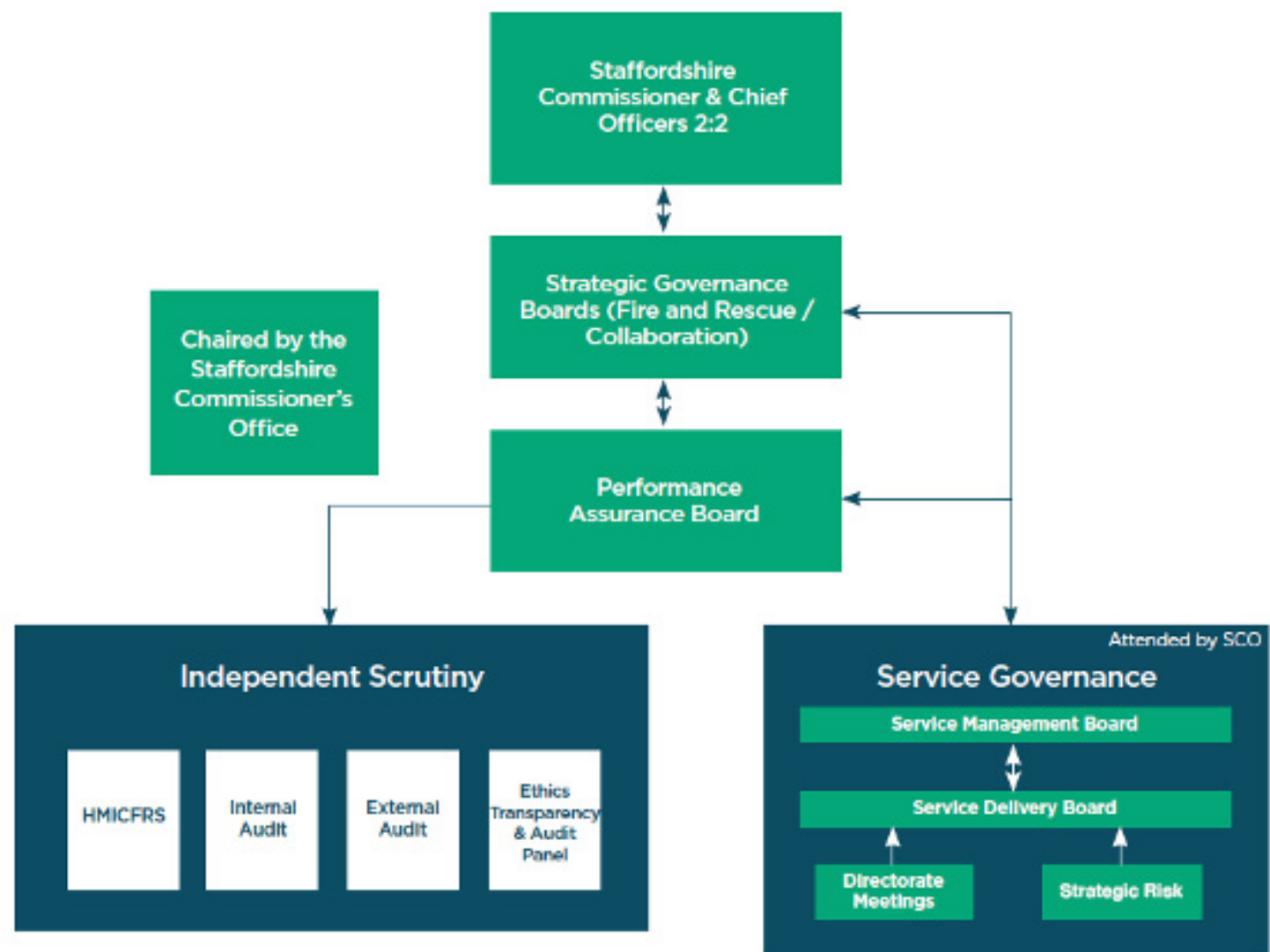
A well-established and robust performance management system is in place internally throughout the Service with senior management carrying out regular performance monitoring. Performance against delivery of our strategic objectives is measured by using key performance indicators (both quantitative and qualitative). Achievements against these key performance indicators are reported regularly to the Service Delivery Board and monitoring reports are scrutinised by the Commissioner's office at Performance Assurance Board. Strategic Governance Board scrutinise detailed financial reports on a quarterly basis. The reports include full details

of performance against budget for the key reporting areas namely, revenue, capital, cash and delivery of efficiencies and savings.

Under the governance arrangements the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP), which also has a separate Finance Panel that receives bi-monthly finance reports, performs the function of the Audit Committee. The Finance Panel includes a number of qualified accountants who are able to provide detailed scrutiny to the monthly Resource Control Report, Internal and External Audit Reports, also the **Annual Statement of Accounts** and provide professional advice to the members of ETAP.



The Governance Structure in place under the Staffordshire Commissioner during 2020/2021 is detailed below:



Public Performance meetings

Public Performance meetings are the forum in which the Commissioner holds the Chief Fire Officer to account for the service to the public. The Service is required to demonstrate the quality of its service in different areas and is assessed against the vision of the Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan. This year's topics included the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our performance, prevention activity during the pandemic, police/fire collaboration, funding and precept. The meetings also consider fire and rescue performance data, allowing the Commissioner to assess performance against the priorities set out in our **Safety Plan 2020-2024**.



Operational assurance

Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority has carried out its functions in accordance with the defined statutory and policy framework in which it is required to operate:

- **Safety Plan 2020-2024**
- **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004**
- **Civil Contingencies Act 2004**
- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**
- **Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007**
- **Localism Act 2011**
- **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**
- **Health and Safety Act at Work etc. Act 1974**

Mutual aid arrangements are in place with neighbouring fire and rescue services to provide resilience for cross-border, large scale or complex incidents where additional resources are needed. We support the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit, which co-ordinates multiagency training, planning for and response to complex incidents that would have a large impact on our county, e.g. pandemic illnesses, wide-scale flooding or terror-related incidents. The Service contributes to the national resilience programme and we can make a number of our assets and resources available to support across the country to support major incidents that would otherwise overwhelm local resources.

We have robust business continuity plans in place which are integral to managing corporate risk and to ensure we can continue to provide a fire and rescue service to our communities in the event of a major disruption.

Governance and **assurance**

Annual Governance Statement

The Commissioner will receive all funding, including the government grant, and other sources of income related to fire and rescue services. But it's important to note both Staffordshire Police Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police remain separate organisations with separate budgets, staff and governance processes.

The Annual Governance Statement is published as part of the Service's **Annual Statement of Accounts**. The statement publicly explains how the Service manages its governance and internal control measures. In addition, the Narrative Statement contained within the Annual Statement of Accounts also provides the reader with a broad understanding of the Service's financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2021, by clearly explaining the funding position, and how this funding is spent in order to deliver the priorities as set out within the **Safety Plan 2020-2024**. It is an open and honest account of how we ensure financial management systems are adequate and effective and demonstrate a sound system of internal control, assuring utmost integrity in all dealings. The Annual Governance Statement for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 is published on our website within the Annual Statement of Accounts.

HMICFRS carries out a rolling programme of inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, in addition to carrying out all national policing inspections. These inspection reports provide a valuable assessment of a fire and rescue service's effectiveness and efficiency and how well they look after their people.

HMICFRS use ratings of 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Requires Improvement' and 'Inadequate'. In the latest **HMICFRS Inspection report**, published 17 December 2019, we were rated 'Good' at providing an effective service to the public and making the best use of our resources and also for looking after our people. We were rated as 'Outstanding' at promoting the right values and culture. In line with the HMICFRS inspection programme the Service is scheduled for its next full inspection in early 2022.



Our response to the **COVID-19** pandemic

A tripartite agreement was established between the national Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Fire Chiefs, and Fire and Rescue employers in the early part of the pandemic in terms of major incident preparedness and national resilience. It set out a range of additional firefighter duties including driving ambulances and delivering PPE and medical supplies to NHS staff and care facilities. The Commissioner expressed early support for the Service to take an active part in all additional activities whilst also continuing business as usual where possible. Take up of the additional activities was on a voluntary basis and good relationships with local representative bodies allowed for their swift adoption, ensuring each activity was locally risk assessed prior to commencing.

Locally a number of staff were seconded into different roles to support the Covid response. One member of staff was seconded to the Civil Contingencies Unit to source PPE and other useful equipment for the fight against COVID-19. This soon progressed into sourcing food and they managed to secure the equivalent of £500,000 worth of food items including over 120,000 meals which were distributed to the most vulnerable. Other members of the team were involved in the logistics of delivering various provisions both to other organisations and to vulnerable members of the community. Hundreds of welfare visits to check on vulnerable people who had not requested the support of services available to them, were provided by a number of staff either, both by telephone and/or socially distanced visits.

Leek and Newcastle Community Fire Stations were used as emergency PPE storage facilities so that healthcare workers who were in need of immediate access to PPE could attend anytime of the day to collect equipment.

Crews at the station were also on call to provide out of hours meals for vulnerable people who for whatever reason has not received a meal during the daytime deliveries.

Staff in Tamworth and Lichfield were involved in local surge testing in these areas, providing door to door test kits when new strains were identified in these areas. Moving forward this is expected to include the administering of COVID-19 vaccinations.

Sadly, at the height of the second wave of the pandemic in January 2021 we lost one of our own, when Crew Manager Alec Elwell sadly passed away as the result of Covid-19. Alec was a serving firefighter at Hanley Fire Station and his untimely death shocked the whole of the Service. Wellbeing arrangements were put in place for staff affected by Alec's death and support was provided to his family during what was a very difficult time for those closest to him.

In August 2020, the Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to inspect all 45 fire and rescue services across England to see how they responded to the challenges of tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. The inspections considered and examined:

- what was working well and lessons learned;
- how the fire and rescue sector responded to the COVID-19 crisis;
- how fire and rescue services dealt with the problems they faced; and
- what changes were likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

In its subsequent report, Responding to the pandemic: The fire and rescue service's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, HMICFRS praised the Service for its response to the pandemic. The report found that

the Service "responded to the pandemic effectively" and inspectors were "particularly impressed with its preparations" and had anticipated many of the impacts of the pandemic and put measures in place to mitigate them. It also recognised that the Service "gave additional support to the community" during the pandemic and "used its whole-time firefighters to respond to emergencies, support vulnerable people in the community and help partner agencies." This action, the report said, "increased availability of its on-call workforce helped the service to continue to be able to respond to emergencies" and "meant the people of Staffordshire were well supported through the pandemic."

The report also highlighted the mental health support that has been provided to our staff, how we adapted to change effectively and quickly – putting homeworking arrangements in place and procuring

suitable IT infrastructure efficiently. It also focused on how colleagues have taken on new additional activities in communities to help with the pandemic, including the packing/repacking food for vulnerable people delivering PPE and antigen testing. Against this backdrop the report recognises that we have continued to respond to calls from the public and attend emergencies; prioritising support for those most vulnerable in our communities. It also reported on our ongoing work with local businesses to make sure they are compliant with fire safety regulations and how the Safe and Sound schools' education programme moved completely online to enable learning to continue when group delivery in our pods was not possible during the pandemic.

Finances

The Staffordshire Commissioner is responsible for the finances of the Service with a net revenue budget of £42.4 million approved in February 2020, which included £0.3 million of efficiency savings to be delivered during the year. The Service is responsible for providing its services to a population of just over 1.1 million people in our communities across the City of Stoke-on-Trent and the county of Staffordshire. In total, we attended around 8,078 emergency incidents during the year ending 31 March 2021. The Staffordshire Commissioner manages the affairs of the Authority to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for delivering value for money through securing financial resilience and challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It is imperative that the Service continues to play a leading role in the communities we serve to ensure that Staffordshire remains one of the safest places to be.

The total Revenue spend at the year-end, before reflecting the use of reserves and capital financing, is £41.0m which is £1.4m favourable to budget and reflects the savings and efficiencies delivered through the budget setting/year-end forecast meetings with Budget Holders and also the on-going impact of COVID-19 which has reduced the prevention activity levels throughout the year. Whilst significant costs have been incurred by the Service in response to the pandemic, these additional costs have all been funded in year by the £1m in grant funding received from the Home Office.

The Capital Programme for 2020-2021 was approved at £6.1m, which includes the collaboration work at Hanley Fire Station. The capital work has now been successfully completed at Hanley with the Police moving into the joint facility during January 2021.

Accounting Statements

The **Annual Statement of Accounts** is published to present fairly the financial position and transactions of the Staffordshire Commissioner (Fire and Rescue) Authority (the Authority) in a fair and transparent manner. Its format is prescribed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

The main statements consist of:

- Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts which sets out the responsibilities of the Authority and the Treasurer for the accounts;
- Annual Governance Statement which assesses the adequacy of the Authority's governance arrangements and identifies where improvements can be made;
- Statement of Accounting Policies which sets out the basis for recognising, measuring and disclosing transactions in the accounts;
- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement which summarises income and expenditure on the Authority's services during 2020/21; and presents all the recognised gains and losses of the Authority during 2020/21;

- Movement in Reserves Statement which reconciles the Income and Expenditure Account with General Fund Balances taking into account contributions to reserves committed for future expenditure;
- Balance Sheet which sets out the Authority's financial position as at 31 March 2021;
- Cash Flow Statement that summarises the inflows and outflows of cash in the year.

The Statement of Accounts is available on our website at:
www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Printed copies can be obtained by contacting our Finance team on
0300 330 1000.



Response

- 8,078** total incidents ↓ **DOWN 5%** from last year
- 544** road traffic collisions ↓ **DOWN 22%** from last year
- 518** accidental house fires ↓ **DOWN 10%** from last year
- 1,803** small outdoor fires ↑ **UP 23%** from last year
- 3** accidental house fire deaths ↓ **DOWN 40%** from last year
- 20** accidental house fire injuries ↑ **UP 43%** from last year
- 122** accidental business fires ↓ **DOWN 13%** from last year
- 35** deliberate business fires ↓ **DOWN 17%** from last year



Protection

5 Enforcement Notices and **6** Prohibition Notices issued

334 telephone fire safety audits

488 full fire safety audits were carried out on those premises deemed most at risk

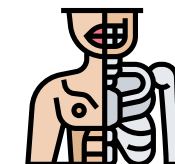
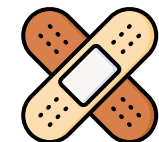


Health and Safety

Injuries down to **26**, in comparison to **57** the previous year.

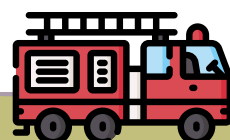
Breakdown:

- 4** struck against object
- 4** manual handling
- 6** slip, trip or fall
- 7** struck by object
- 2** fall from height
- 1** musculoskeletal
- 1** entrapment
- 1** other



Prevention

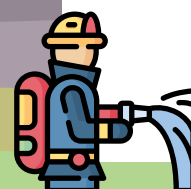
4,147 Safe and Well visits * ▼ **DOWN 87%** from last year



Human Resources

20

new wholetime firefighters recruited - Jan 2021



Finance

Budget set at **£42.4m**, actual spend was **£41m**.



£1.4m saved

*Due to Covid-19 restrictions only high priority Safe and Well visits were carried out.

**Due to Covid-19 less people were working at stations and less activities were taking place which could have been contributory factors.

What do you think of our Statement of Assurance?

We welcome any views you may have on the content of this Statement of Assurance. If you have any feedback, thoughts or suggestions, or if you would like to take part in future consultation please email us at **consultation@staffordshirefire.gov.uk**, or visit our website at **www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk** where you will find links to further information about our services and activities.



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

Contact

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Pirehill
Stone
Staffordshire
ST15 0BS



www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk