

**Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service  
Annual Assurance Statement for the year 2014/15**

The revised Fire and Rescue National Framework was published in July 2012. The Framework sets out the requirement for all English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to provide an annual assurance statement on financial, governance and operational matters and; to demonstrate how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Further guidance on these statements was issued by Government in May 2013, with an expectation that the first statements would be published within the financial year 2013/14 and annually thereafter. This is the third annual statement of assurance for the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and is in effect a look back on 2014/15.

I certify that this Statement of Assurance gives a true and fair view of the financial, governance and operational arrangements that the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority had in place for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Jordan', with a horizontal line underneath.

Signed:

Cllr Phil Jordan

Cabinet Member for Public Protection

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mick Keenan', with a horizontal line underneath.

Signed:

Mick Keenan

Local Senior Officer

(On behalf of the Chief Fire Officer Dave Curry)

## **Scope of responsibility**

The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS), is the statutory fire and rescue service for the Isle of Wight, and is part of the Unitary Authority of the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) which is also the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).

The purpose of this Statement of Assurance is to provide information in an accessible way. The Statement also demonstrates how IWFRS has had due regard to the expectations set out in its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the requirements placed upon fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) by Government in the Framework. However, there is also a realisation that information already exists and should not be duplicated. Therefore, where this is the case, in particular within a County Fire Authority, readers are directed through hyperlinks to that information.

## **Background**

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (“the Act”) is the core legislation for fire and rescue services in England and Wales and details the statutory responsibilities of FRA's. Under the Act FRA's have a statutory duty to provide a fire and rescue service that:

- is equipped to extinguish fires
- protect life and property from fires and other incidents
- rescue people from road traffic collisions
- respond to other emergencies.

Adequate provision must be made to receive and respond to calls for assistance, to ensure staff are properly trained and equipped and to gather information to facilitate delivery of an effective service. The Act also includes a statutory duty for FRA's to provide communities with fire safety education and advice with the aim of reducing deaths and injuries from fire and other incidents.

Under the Act the Secretary of State produced a Framework that set out the Government's priorities and objectives for FRAs.

## **Introduction**

IWFRS provides a 24 hour emergency response service for fires, road traffic collisions and other emergency incidents. It also delivers a range of prevention and protection activities aimed at reducing fires and other incidents, including enforcement of Fire Safety legislation in order to help keep the people and businesses of the Island safe. A detailed risk profile of the Island is provided in the IWFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan [Fire and Rescue Service - Service Details](#)

## **Financial**

IWFRS carries out its duties, as part of IWC, under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999, in respect of ensuring that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

IWFRS adheres to IWC financial procedures including; budget setting, budget monitoring, and the production of final accounts.

The Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts, which is used to present the Council's financial performance in accordance with proper practices as set out in the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. The final accounts are then submitted for approval to the Audit Committee.

The annual statement of accounts [Financial Management - Service Details](#) is also subject to robust examination by external auditors who provide an independent assessment and report as to whether or not IWC's Statement of Accounts present a true and fair view and that they have appropriate accounting systems in place. This report also includes a review of, and comment on, arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The financial statements of IWC for the year ended 31st March 2015 have been audited externally in line with guidance in the Audit Commission Act 1998 the external audit process concluded that the accounts presented provide a true and fair view of the financial position of IWC.

## **Governance**

IWC as the Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and is used economically, efficiently and effectively. As a component part of IWC, the FRA has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Council's governance arrangements, which also apply to the Fire & Rescue Service, are the subject of an annual review in accordance with the Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2011. The Council publishes the results of that review in the form of an [Annual Governance Statement](#).

## **Operational**

The IWFRS operates as all Fire Services do, under the following legislative framework:

- 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.

The IWFRS operates within a unique geographical location, an island isolated from the mainland and this creates its own resilience and operational risk considerations. As part of our risk management process, we have entered into a number of resilience partnerships:

- Strategic Partnership Agreement with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. One Chief Officer and Senior Management Team. This partnership ensures resilience and capacity are created for the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.
- 999 Call Handling and mobilisation now undertaken through Surrey FRS
- We have an arrangement for mutual assistance with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service under Section 13 of the Fire and Rescue Service Act which enables cross service support to be called upon when required.
- We have a section 16 arrangement with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service whereby we have services delivered where a costs/ benefit / risk basis is justified. This includes specialist Urban Search and Rescue capabilities as well as other highly specialist operational capabilities.

As mentioned earlier, the IWFRS has an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) in place which details locally agreed attendance standards to property fires, road traffic collisions (RTCs) and incidents involving hazardous materials. These attendance standards are agreed and set by IWFRS following due consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The IRMP can be viewed at [Fire and Rescue Service - Service Details](#)

IWFRS will conduct an annual review of both the planned activities contained within the Corporate Plan and the effectiveness of the IRMP and in practice will operate a continuous process of review and improvement.

Rigorous monitoring ensured that IWFRS achieved its Response Standards, which relate to the time which residents can expect a fire engine to attend an emergency incident. Detailed information in respect of IWFRS performance can be found at [Fire and Rescue Service - Service Details](#) and utilises detailed mapping software, emergency incident data, local intelligence and the effective use of partner referrals to produce a detailed, effective community risk profile which is used to target resources and activities. This is in accordance with the duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to make arrangements to obtain necessary information for the purposes of:

- extinguishing fire
- protecting lives and property from fires
- rescuing and protecting people from harm from road traffic accidents
- or for dealing with any other emergency function other than fires and road traffic accidents.

The IWFRS sets out an annual [Service Plan](#) to detail how it plans to achieve the priorities set out in the IRMP. This can be found at:

### **Peer Review**

In late 2013 the IWFRS undertook the Fire Service Operational Assessment and Peer Challenge process. This is a process that is supported by the Local Government Association, Chief Fire Officers Association and Government.

The initial part of the process we undertook was our self-assessment against the criteria set out in the process. This looked at issues such as leadership, capacity and

targeting risk effectively. This was followed up by an on-site review or inspection in February 2014.

<http://www.iwight.com/azservices/documents/2719-IWFRS-Peer-Review-Report-Feb-2014-FINAL.pdf>

The final report highlighted the excellent progress made by the IWFRS and focussed on strong political and officer leadership, well targeted risk management, excellent delivery of services and also on the high regard the Fire Service is held by partner agencies with whom we work closely.

However, the report also highlighted the issues of sustainability, capacity and resilience and based upon this awareness, and this was reported on later in 2014. This review was a catalyst for the aforementioned Strategic Partnership between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

### **Looking Forward**

Given the ongoing significant financial challenges facing the Isle of Wight Council the service is continuing to progress the “Delivering Differently in Partnership” project with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. This project will deliver over three years products based on the following areas:

- Training
- Service Policy and procedure
- Fleet and Equipment Management
- Health and Safety Management
- Data and Knowledge Management

This project has a forecast cumulative saving figure in excess of £1million over the first three years of the partnership.

### **Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP)**

As mentioned earlier, the IWFRS has an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) in place which details locally agreed attendance standards to property fires, road traffic collisions (RTCs) and incidents involving hazardous materials. However, in light of significant and ongoing financial challenges, and a shift in local risk profiling, a broader and longer term strategy was consulted on in 2014/15 which set out a 2020 vision.

The IRMP can be viewed at [Fire and Rescue Service - Service Details](#)

Within the 2014/20 IRMP we set out a vision that by 2020:

The Island will be safer to live, work and visit.

- The Service will be a more integrated and valued part of the Isle of Wight Council.
- The Service will be considered high performing by the community it serves and offering excellent value for money.

- There will be less money available but a more flexible workforce with mutual understanding between all staff, trade unions and communities over our priorities and will be supporting an excellent service.
- Innovation will be at the heart of our service delivery with alternative approaches including new types of fire service vehicles responding to certain incidents.
- We will be working with partners in all aspects of our work and we will continue to be the 'partner of choice' due to our can do culture.

Our proposals within the IRMP are now described in terms of the outcomes we aim to have achieved by 2020. These are to have;

Outcome 1: Revised and achieved our risk based response standards.

Outcome 2: Matched resources to levels of risk.

Outcome 3: Created capacity through more flexible working arrangements to further improve firefighter and community safety.

Outcome 4: Increased the use of volunteers to support our work with communities.

Outcome 5: Developed resilient response arrangements on the Island, for all calls for assistance.

Outcome 6: Improved the provision and use of our assets including property with other partners.

Outcome 7: Further developed our working arrangements with other key partners to help deliver an excellent Service.

In essence, our progress can be summed up as:

Outcome 1: The new response standards were put in place from April 2014 so we will report on progress in future reports

Outcome 2: We have utilised flexible crewing arrangements to ensure we have the right resources in the right place based on risk. This includes targeting our prevention resources to target the most vulnerable and we will develop this further.

Outcome 3: We are working with our partners in Hampshire within the Strategic Partnership.

Outcome 4: We are working more than ever with the voluntary sector in particular with Age UK in developing some really focussed preventative work. We aim to develop an IWFRS voluntary scheme in the near future..

Outcome 5: Through developing the strategic partnership with Hampshire FRS, we will build in increased resilience.

Outcome 6: We share our facilities with local partner agencies and are looking to increase this within the coming year.

Outcome 7: We are currently working on partnerships with local Ambulance and Police in relation to medical response.