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# **Annual Statement of Assurance 2019/20**

November 2020

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## Forward

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This Statement of Assurance is published to demonstrate how Cleveland Fire Authority, has met its commitments to our communities across Teesside in providing an efficient and effective fire and rescue service during 2019/20. It is based on the outcomes of external and independent assurance activities undertaken during the year which are further substantiated by the Brigade's routine internal assurance activities across all of its service areas.

Keeping our communities safe is at the heart of everything we do as a Fire and Rescue Service and is the golden thread running through every aspect of our work, whether that is responding to emergencies or undertaking wider prevention and protection activities around our complex risk and demand operating environment.

The fire and rescue sector has continued to face significant financial and operational challenges, and this has resulted in Cleveland Fire Brigade looking for innovative ways to deliver our priorities and maintain our excellent performance within our finite resource base and complex operating environment.

Our performance demonstrates the effectiveness and efficiency of our services and this has been confirmed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) who stated;

*"I am pleased to report that Cleveland Fire Brigade performed well in each of the main areas of our inspection. This is also impressive given that the brigade has faced some of the largest cuts to its government funding. This is an excellent performance from the brigade – the people of Cleveland can be confident that they are being well-served."*

HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Phil Gormley December 2019

# 1 Introduction

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The [National Framework for England](#) provides overall strategic direction to English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA). It sets out the Government's priorities and objectives and places a requirement on all FRA's to provide assurance to their communities and Government on financial, governance and operational matters. The Framework requires all English Fire and Rescue Authorities to publish Statements of Assurance. It says:

*Each fire and rescue authority is required to produce an **Annual statement of assurance**. The statement should outline the way in which the authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard to the National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and to any strategic plan prepared by the Authority for that The authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters.*

This is Cleveland Fire Authority's (CFA) Statement of Assurance for 2019/20 and provides the necessary accountability and transparency to the people of Teesside that it's Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver against the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and the Authority's Community Integrated Risk Management Plan (CIRMP). This statement follows the guidance set out in the Department of Communities and Local Government's 'Guidance on Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England'. Much of the information in the statement is already contained in other documents; in such circumstances the Statement of Assurance contains hyperlinks to these documents.

Cleveland Fire Authority, a Combined Fire Authority, is located in the North East of England and provides fire and rescue services incorporating the unitary borough authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-On-Tees.

*The Authority's vision is to it builds a sustainable future that:*

- makes a positive difference to the safety and quality of life of every local citizen; and the places where they live and work*
- delivers services by people who are professional, proud and passionate*
- is nationally recognised as being high performing and innovative; and internationally renowned for being able to reduce risk in business, industry and the home*

The Authority has published the following documents detailing its vision, strategic goals and aims and how these will be achieved, notably;

- [Community Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018-2022](#)
- [Service Plan 2019-20](#)

An [Annual Performance and Efficiency Report 2019/20](#) is published and provides information on progression towards the achievement of the vision, the strategic goals and aims.

## 2 Risk Profile

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Cleveland is an area in the North East of England and incorporates the unitary borough authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-On-Tees.

CFA provides fire and rescue services to an area of approximately 597km<sup>2</sup> across four borough council areas. The Authority's area, centred around the mouth of the River Tees, has a population of 566,150 living in 249,221 dwellings. The population consists of 49% males and 51% females, with 5.5% of the population from black and ethnic minority communities.



A detail of the make-up of the Brigade and the Communities it serves is detailed in the [Workforce and Community Profiles](#).

Teesside shares many of the inner city type problems that are a key feature of the UK's metropolitan areas such as older nineteenth low cost housing (terraced), derelict land, high unemployment, congestion, high density of buildings & population with narrow roadways that are not fit for modern usage and transport. Within the area there are 41 high rise residential or commercial buildings with a further 5 due for demolition and 3 under development.

There are 15,643 industrial and commercial premises and 249,221 dwellings within the area. Dwellings located in Port Clarence and Lazenby are in extremely close proximity to high hazard industries thereby making the risks these communities face more unique.

The area is a major production centre for the chemical industry with 29 'top tier' COMAH sites located within the area, which represent a high hazard in the local area. Should serious incidents occur in such sites it would take the deployment of significant volume of fire service resources, in terms of equipment, time and people with suitable skills and abilities, to bring them to a safe conclusion.

The area produces energy for the national grid through seven solar powered energy farms, 12 onshore and one offshore wind-farms. There are additional Anaerobic Digestion and bio-mass (wood pellets) power stations being constructed to produce electricity for the national grid. The demand to build renewable energy sources is expected to grow as the Tees Valley has been awarded UK Government Care Status as a center for Offshore Renewable Engineering.

Tees Valley Combined Authority is the local transport authority for Tees Valley and there will be an investment of £256 million into transport projects during the period 2019-2029 with one clear vision:

*“To provide a high-quality, clean, quick, affordable, reliable and safe transport network for people and freight to move within, to and from Tees Valley.”*

The area has road networks of 2,506 km which are a mixture of ‘A’ class, ‘B’ class and other roads with no motorways.

The rail network in the Tees Valley plays a key role in linking our main centres of economic activity and in providing crucial connectivity to other parts of the country. Passenger rail has shown significant growth over recent years. Between 2000 and 2018 patronage at all Tees Valley stations has grown by 75%.

Cleveland borders Teesside International Airport (known previously as Durham Tees Valley Airport). This is one of the UKs smaller airports. Following successive declining passenger numbers an increase of 8.5% was seen in 2018 to 142,080 passengers (19,950 aircraft movements including small aircraft arrivals and departures). With the aircraft currently under public ownership (2019) the long-term aspirations are to increase passenger numbers beyond 1.4m in the next decade by attracting a low cost airline.

There are two main ports in the area (Hartlepool and Tees-port). Owned and operated by PD Ports, Tees-port is a major deep sea complex and a national asset for trade. Handling 28 million tonnes per year, the port supports the movement of international imports and exports throughout the North of the UK; affirming its position as a key driver and enabler of the Northern Powerhouse strategy.

Hartlepool Port is a hub for renewable energy, oil and gas activity, including the de-commissioning of oil and gas infrastructure, with a number of industry-leading businesses operating substantial manufacturing facilities. Such businesses can take advantage of the port’s excellent connectivity, extensive available land and like-minded business cluster.

The risks facing the Brigade are fully documented in our [Community Risk Profile](#).

## **Managing our Risks**

The Authority’s Community Integrated Risk Management Plan (CIRMP) identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that might affect its, including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and/or national nature. The Plan takes into account the Community Risk Registers produced by Local Resilience Forums and any other local risk identified in the Corporate Risk Register. This risk information is refreshed on an annual basis.

The CIRMP provides the evidence base from which we deploy resources and services in a focused and targeted manner to drive down the fire related risks facing our local communities. Our resources are configured to ensure that services are positively reducing risk and vulnerability where and when they are needed.

In 2019/20 frontline services were co-ordinated and delivered from Community Safety District Hubs and 14 strategically placed Community Fire Stations. Delivery of services is through a balanced strategy of prevention, protection and emergency response.

- **Prevention** work takes many forms, from Home Fire Safety Visits, Safe and Well visits, marketing, advice and education through to involving the community in helping to design and deliver our services.
- **Protection** activities involve advising individuals and businesses on how to keep safe and businesses about their risk management responsibilities. Fire safety regulations are enforced where necessary.
- Where and when emergency incidents still occur, they are responded to by professional staff using modern methods, appliances and equipment. The Brigade operates to a suite of **emergency response** standards and the [latest information](#) on how fast the Brigade attended to fire incidents indicates that we have the fastest response rates in the country to fire incidents.

The activities undertaken by our firefighters are wide ranging and our approach to the delivery of services means that the people who attend emergency incidents also deliver a range of prevention and protection services in addition to specialist employed staff for these services, thus reducing the risks within our communities.

The CIRMP is used to identify the hazards facing our communities, those groups who are at risk from these hazards, when they are at risk and geographic areas of higher risk for a range of emergency incidents which then enables a combination of prevention, protection and response services to be identified that would have the greatest impact.

### 3 Operational Assurance

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The National Framework outlines the requirement placed upon Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide assurance on operational matters which are determined locally by them in partnership with their local communities, citizens, businesses and others.

#### **Statutory Responsibilities**

CFA has carried out its functions in accordance with the defined statutory and policy framework in which it is required to operate. The key legislative documents defining these responsibilities are:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Licensing Act 2003
- The Building Act 2004

#### **Community Safety Strategy**

The CIRMP details how the identified community risks will be addressed which is underpinned by a detailed Community Safety Strategy. This strategy sets out our operational priorities in order to keep people of Teesside safe. The Community Safety Strategy is the foundation to the operational service delivery arrangements from which we assure and evaluate that the arrangements are robust effective and efficient.

The Performance Management Framework provides information on the effectiveness of operational arrangements. This is underpinned by periodic independent assessments on operational and national resilience arrangements which then provide the necessary assurance on our operational service delivery arrangements both a national and local level.

#### **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

Responsibility for fire formally moved from DCLG to the Home Office in early 2016. In 2017/18 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) commenced inspections of England's Fire & Rescue services that assesses each FRS in terms of their effectiveness, efficiency, and how they treat their people.

Cleveland Fire Brigade was inspected in the third tranche of inspections that were carried out over the period April to July 2019.



In December 2019 a detailed outcome [report](#) was published by the HMICFRS on the findings from their inspection activities, the key findings around the 3 pillars of their inspection, Effectiveness, Efficiency and People, being;

✚ *Effectiveness: Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at providing an effective service to the public. It is good at:*

- *understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies;*
- *preventing fires and other risks;*
- *protecting the public through fire regulation;*
- *responding to fires and other emergencies;*
- *responding to national risks.*

✚ *Efficiency: The brigade is good in the efficiency of its services. We found it to be good at making the best use of resources. And it is good at making its services affordable now and in the future.*

✚ *People: Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at looking after its people. It is good at:*

- *promoting the right values and culture;*
- *getting the right people with the right skills;*
- *managing performance and developing leaders.*

*But it requires improvement at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.*

*Overall, we commend Cleveland Fire Brigade for its performance. This provides a good foundation for improvement in the year ahead.*

HMICFRS Outcome Report December 2019

Against each pillar a graded judgement was provided. Within the report any areas for improvement were detailed. The following tables provide a summary of the judgements from the inspection report.

**CFB HMICFRS Inspection Outcomes**

<b>Pillar / Diagnostic</b>	<b>Judgment</b>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
○ Community Risk	<b>Good</b>
○ Prevention	<b>Good</b>
○ Protection	<b>Good</b>
○ Response	<b>Good</b>
○ National Resilience	<b>Good</b>

<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>Good</b>
○ Use of Resources	<b>Good</b>
○ Affordability	<b>Good</b>

<b>People</b>	<b>Good</b>
○ Values and Culture	<b>Good</b>
○ Correct Skills	<b>Good</b>
○ Fairness and Diversity	<b>Requires Improvement</b>
○ Leaders	<b>Good</b>

**National Resilience**

National Resilience is defined as the capacity and capability of Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together and with other Category 1 and 2 responders to deliver a sustained, effective response to major incidents, emergencies and disruptive challenges, such as (but not limited to) those identified in the National Security Risk Assessment. It refers to risks that need to be planned for on a strategic national basis because their impacts and consequences would be of such scale and/or complexity that local resources would be insufficient, even when taking into account mutual aid arrangements, pooling and reconfiguration of resources and collective action.

The [National Resilience Assurance](#) Team conducted an assessment of our Mass Decontamination and Detection, Identification and Monitoring arrangements in January 2020.

The outcomes demonstrates that 13 areas of assessment achieved full compliance and the remaining 2 areas have identified opportunities for improvement. No areas were non-compliant.

## **Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP)**

The Brigade was audited on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017 by the JESIP inspection team as part of assurance visits of all Police, Fire, and Ambulance services in England and Wales during 2017.

The visits were specifically intended to measure the progress made by services in embedding JESIP into their business as usual arrangements in line with the HMIC Tri-Service recommendations of 2015 and to review how robust the services arrangements appeared in terms of the future delivery and maintenance of JESIP. An outcomes report on the findings was received by the Brigade in November 2017 and a resultant improvement plan was developed to address the identified gaps and areas for improvement. During 2019 an internal review of progress of these actions identified that all actions arising from this inspection have been fully implemented.

## **Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defence Capability Assessment**

In November 2019 the National CBRN Centre published the outcomes of the CBRN Capability Assurance Programme. Based on findings from representatives of the National CBRN Centre the report makes recommendations for Emergency Services to review and consider in order to improve arrangements relating to responding to a CBRN Incident.

The Brigade has taken the opportunity to voluntarily self-assess against these recommendations and has assessed itself as fully compliant against 14 of the recommendations and is progressing actions to ensure compliance against the remaining 4.

## **Collaborative Working and Interoperability**

The Brigade works with a wide variety of local partners to deliver its balanced strategy of Prevention, Protection and Emergency response in a joined up and co-ordinated fashion.

In 2019/20 we were an active member of the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum (CLRF). This is a multi-agency partnership that provides a structure to help agencies plan and prepare for major incidents and emergencies which may have a significant impact on the community. The LRF assists partners to meet their statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 and accompanying statutory guidance entitled "Preparing for Emergencies). It is made up of Category 1, 2 and non-category responders.

As a category one responder we are an active member of the Local Resilience Forum on the CLRF Strategic Board, Tactical Business Group, Tactical Business Continuity focus group, Training and Exercise Group, Risk Assessment group, Blue Lights Group, Flood and adverse weather group and Warn and Inform Group.

The Brigade has established a collaborative tri partite partnership arrangement with Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services to ensure emergency response duties using the Brigade's mobilising system at times of high demand for emergency response call handling or when Business Continuity plans are activated.

The Prevention services are based around home safety, road safety, water safety, arson reduction and youth engagement. Programmes and activities within these themes were targeted at those most vulnerable and delivered in conjunction with key partners in areas where there will be maximum benefit to the recipients.

The Authority's Protection strategy aims to educate and regulate the built environment to protect people, property and the environment from harm. To deliver this the Brigade has developed close working relationships with other public enforcement bodies and delivers an annual risk based inspection program of buildings within the Brigade's area.

### **Mutual Aid Agreements**

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides clear instructions and powers for FRS to make agreements (reinforcement schemes) with other Authorities to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and emergencies within their area and in other areas. The Brigade is required to enter into such reinforcement schemes, as far as is practicable, for securing mutual assistance between authorities so statutory functions can be discharged at all times.

CFA holds and operates to formalised section 13/16 support arrangements with other fire and rescue services, notably Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to support operational activities.

### **Business Continuity**

Business Continuity Management is an integral part of the Authority's corporate risk management process. Fire and Rescue Authorities have a duty to ensure plans are in place that will satisfy the requirements of both the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004.

Having robust Business Continuity Plans is essential for the Service to minimise the impact of any disruption on its ability to deliver an effective service to the community whether the disruptions result from staff shortage, loss of premises, technology failure, loss of information or loss of a key supplier or partner.

Operational Business Continuity Plans have been developed over a number of years in conjunction with the Local Resilience Forum. To assure their effectiveness there are regular multi agency training and testing of the plans.


Each Department within the Brigade has its own Business Continuity Plan to ensure continuity. These are reviewed and refreshed annually.


Business Continuity Plans are being continually reviewed and tested to ensure they are fit for purpose when required to be enacted. Each Department head reviews their BCP on an annual basis and an audit and assurance plan is in place to ensure that plans can be tested against realistic scenarios.

Through mechanisms of horizon scanning, structured meetings, generic and bespoke plans, training of staff, exercises and audit processes, the Authority strives to ensure it has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure an appropriate level of service is available to the communities of Teesside at all times. When plans are enacted a process of review is instigated to ensure any lessons learnt from the events are captured and included within the reviews of the business Continuity arrangements.

## Emergency Response

To meet the risk across Cleveland, the Authority's priority is to, when required, respond to and attend any incident as quickly as possible as we recognise the quicker we are able to get to an incident the greater the chance there is of survivability.

 **Response Standards:** The CIRMP 2018-22 introduced a set of equitable transparent response standards to life risk incidents. Performance against these standards is monitored, reported on and analysed throughout the year. In 2019/20 all emergency response standards have been achieved. Additional prevention service arrangements have been put in place for those areas in the Brigade area that the Brigade can't reach within these standards.

 **Actual Attendance Times:** Annually the Home Office publish details of actual average response times to Fire Incidents by individual service. The [latest information](#) published indicates that the Brigade has the fastest average actual response times to primary fire incidents in the country.

## Tees-wide Safeguarding Board Quality Assurance Framework Assessment

Our prevention work is targeted towards the most vulnerable individuals in the community and as such we are a key member of the Tees-wide adult and children safeguarding partnerships.

In December 2019 the Brigade was assessed by the Tees-wide Safeguarding Adults Board under their quality assurance framework. The final assessment report received in February 2020 indicated strong areas of assurance with a number of areas identified as exceptional practice.

## 4 Financial Assurance

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Fire and Rescue Authorities are responsible for ensuring that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. CFA conducts its duties 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.

### 2019/20 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan

The CFA meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 approved the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy, which included the budget and council tax for 2019/20.

CFA delivers value for money services in particular considering the complex and high hazard environment it operates in. During 2019/20 the Council Tax for a Band D property was the equivalent of £77.36 per annum compared to the national average of £76.51 for combined Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The equivalent comparator Council Tax rates of neighbouring Brigades are Tyne and Wear Fire Authority (£82.33), North Yorkshire Fire Authority (£71.27), and Durham and Darlington Fire Authority (£103.50).

### 2019/20 Financial Performance

It is a statutory requirement for Authorities to publish the financial results of their activities for the year. This information is contained in the statement of accounts within '[The Financial Report](#)'.

As detailed in the Financial Report the Authority's total net revenue budget for 2019/20 was £26.265m (which equates to £46.39 per person in the Teesside area) with a total spend of £25.442m before contributions to reserves.

Our External Auditors, Mazars LLP, who are an independent body to the Authority, audit the Authority's financial statements and provide an opinion whether value for money is being achieved.

### Opinion on Financial Statements

*'We have audited the financial statements of Cleveland Fire Authority and its subsidiary (the Group) for the year ended 31 March 2020, which comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Firefighter Pension Fund Account Statements, the Group Movement in Reserves Statement, the Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Group Balance Sheet, the Group Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.'*

*In our opinion, the financial statements:*

- *give a true and fair view of the financial position of Cleveland Fire Authority and the Group as at 31st March 2020 and of the Authority's and the Group's expenditure and income for the year ended; and*
- *have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.'*

*CFA 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
'Mazars Audit Completion Report'.*

### **Audit Judgement on Efficiency and Value for Money (VFM)**

The External Auditors are required to conclude whether the Authority has in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

External Audit form this opinion by considering the evidence and arrangements in place against two criteria specified by the Audit Commission, notably;

- Financial resilience, that considers evidence across three main areas:
  - financial governance;
  - financial planning;
  - financial control.
- Securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness, that considers evidence across two main areas:
  - prioritising resources;
  - improving efficiency and productivity.

Following the work by Mazars, in October 2020 they reported to Members of CFA their conclusion on the Authority's arrangements for achieving Efficiency and Value for Money. Their conclusion states;

*'On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2020, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, Cleveland Fire Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2020.'*

*CFA 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
'Mazars Audit Completion Report'.*

Within the Financial Statements CFA published details of the salary and remuneration of all senior officers who have a salary of more than £50,000.

The [pay policy statement](#) brings the information on remuneration into a single document for public information and meets the obligations of the Localism Act 2011. It was approved by CFA on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

In 2010 the Government placed an obligation on public bodies to publish details of all expenditure over £500. Cleveland Fire Authority published such [information](#) on its website on a monthly basis.



## 4 Corporate Governance

Cleveland Fire Authority has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to conduct business in accordance with the law ensuring public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. We are committed to the highest standards of conduct and have robust controls over the use of resources, based on open decision making, accountability and transparency.

The Brigade takes decisions every day that impacts businesses, our residents and visitors to our area. Our Constitution details how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The most significant decisions relating to our plans and strategies, such as setting and agreeing the CIRMP, setting the budget and Council Tax level, are taken by CFA. Other decisions are delegated to the Executive Committee with operational management decisions, as well as decisions in respect of functions which require professional officer training and skills, delegated to Officers in accordance with our approved Scheme of Delegation

In 2019/20 Cleveland Fire Authority was made up of 16 Elected Members from the four councils of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton in the Authority Area. The membership from each of the four Councils is based on their population and is politically balanced to reflect the make-up of the Council. In 2019/20 the membership was;

Hartlepool	3 Members	1 Labour, 1 Independent, 1 Socialist Labour
Middlesbrough	4 Members	2 Labour, 2 MICA
Redcar & Cleveland	4 Members	2 Labour, 1 Independent, 1 Liberal Democrat
Stockton	5 Members	2 Labour, 1 Conservative, 1 Independent 1 TIA

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

To support this, the following committees and Forums are in place;

- Cleveland Fire Authority\*
- Executive Committee\*
- Audit and Governance Committee\*
- Local Pension Board\*
- Independent Remuneration Panel (ad hoc)\*\*

\* Meetings scheduled at regular intervals during the year

**\*\*Meetings held on an as demand basis**

Our governance framework comprises systems, processes, culture and values by which the Authority directs and controls its activities through which it is accountable for and engages with the community. The Authority has approved and adopted a [code of corporate governance](#) which encompasses the guidance and best practice outlined in the ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework’ (2016 edition) which is published by CIPFA and SOLACE.

Corporate governance services are provided to the Fire Authority through the role of a Legal Adviser/Monitoring Officer and a SLA with Hartlepool Borough Council for the provision of a financial governance function that includes the role of the Treasurer and an internal audit function.

### **Governance Framework**

CFA has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The governance framework comprises of systems, processes, culture and values by which the Authority directs and controls its activities through which it is accountable for and engages with the community. The Framework enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic priorities and to consider whether those priorities have resulted in the delivery of appropriate and cost-effective services.

### **Code of Corporate Governance**

The Authority has approved and adopted a [code of corporate governance](#) which encompasses the guidance and best practice outlined in the ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework’ (2016 edition) which is published by CIPFA and SOLACE.

Corporate governance services are provided to the Fire Authority through a combination of a SLA with Hartlepool Borough Council who provide the role of Treasurer an Internal Audit function. In addition a dedicated Legal Advisor/Monitoring officer is employed by the Brigade.

An annual Member Development Programme is in place and Corporate and Ethical Governance development is given to officers and managers.

### **Annual Governance Statement**

The preparation of the Annual Governance Statement to support the Financial Report is a statutory requirement for public services. Its purpose is to demonstrate and evidence that there is a continuous review of the effectiveness of the Authority’s internal controls, performance and risk management systems. This enables assurance on their effectiveness to be provided so users of the accounts can be satisfied that proper arrangements are in place to govern spending, safeguard assets and maximise operational effectiveness. The

process enables the production of a corporate action plan to address any identified gaps, weaknesses or areas for improvement.

No issues were identified within our Annual Governance Statement by our Internal Auditors or External Auditors. The [Annual Governance Statement](#) contained within the Financial Report 2019/20 was approved by Members of CFA on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

## **Systems of Internal Control**

Cleveland Fire Authority has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, thereby implementing the principles and responsibilities of effective corporate governance arrangements.

In discharging these responsibilities, the Authority is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control. These systems of internal control form a significant part of the Governance Framework and are designed to manage risk to a reasonable level as they cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. Internal Audit, commissioned from Hartlepool Council, is one methodology adopted to provide the necessary assurance on the effectiveness of the systems of management control.

The Internal Audit function provides challenge and assurance over the effectiveness of our risk management, internal control and governance arrangements and supports, provides advice and challenge management to assist the development of robust systems of control.

A risk based internal audit plan is developed in conjunction with the Authority's Treasurer with the purpose of providing assurance that the system of internal management controls are operating effectively within the Brigade. During 2019/20 an Internal Audit Plan consisting of 15 internal audits was adopted by Elected Members.

The outcome from these audits indicate all have been completed and all with a satisfactory assurance rating.

The outcome from this work enables an assessment of the effectiveness of the system of management controls to be made by the Internal Audit function. The [outcome](#) of the latest review of the system of internal controls was reported to the Audit and Governance Committee and stated;

*"From the work undertaken during the year 2019/20, Internal Audit has reached the opinion that key systems are operating soundly and that there is no fundamental breakdown in controls resulting in material discrepancy. Satisfactory arrangements were implemented to ensure the effective, efficient and economic operation of Cleveland Fire Authority's financial affairs.*

*No system of control can provide absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss, nor can Internal Audit give that assurance; this statement is intended to provide reasonable assurance. These risks are reflected in the audit plan and are the subject of separate reports issued during the course of 2019/20."*

CFA 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020 **'Internal Audit Outturn Report'**

## Local Pension Board

As prescribed in the Public Service Pensions Act, 2013 and associated regulations, the Fire Authority is the “responsible authority” for the effective and efficient management and administration of the Fire-fighter Pension Schemes. The Authority has delegated the management and administration of the schemes to the Chief Fire Officer as Scheme Manager.

The Local Pension Board was established in accordance with Section 5 of the Act and regulation 4 of the Fire-fighters Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014 as amended by the Fire-fighters Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015 and meets on a regular basis. The Board currently comprises of 2 Employer and 2 Employee representatives.

To assist in the governance and assurance arrangements, a representative from XPS Pensions Ltd attend all Board meetings to present their quarterly performance reports in addition to reporting on current/impending issues and any associated risks.

## Compliance with the National Framework Requirements

The Fire and Rescue Services Act requires the Home Secretary to report every two years on the Authority’s compliance with the National Framework.

On 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 the Report by the Home Secretary on Fire and Rescue Authorities’ compliance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England was presented to parliament and published. The key findings from this report are;

*‘Having assessed this information, the Secretary of State is satisfied that every fire and rescue authority in England has acted in accordance with the requirements of the National Framework, and no formal steps have been taken by the Secretary of State since the last assurance statement in 2018 to secure compliance.’*

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Public Sector Equality Duty, of the Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work- in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their staff. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Cleveland Fire Authority is committed to considering equality and diversity in the way we provide our services.

On our website we have [published](#) a range of documents supporting this commitment including an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy, A workforce and Community Profile Analysis Report, a Gender Pay Gap Report and Public Sector Equality Duty Report.

## **Data Protection**

We process information securely and follow the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018. Staff have been required and have completed an electronic training module for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations that came into force 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018. We use secure methods of transferring and storing data and also apply appropriate retention periods. We ensure that the data is disposed of securely when it is no longer required.

## **Compliance with Statutory & Transparency Requirements**

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a revised Transparency Code in February 2015, which specified data and information public bodies must publish. Compliance with the Code is mandated under section 2 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

No areas of non compliance to these requirements have been identified.

## **Cyber Essentials Accreditation**

The Government's National Cyber Security Centre and industry have worked together to produce a scheme designed to help UK organisations with experience of cyber security to improve their defences and demonstrate publically their commitment to cyber security in particular against the following threats;

- hacking — exploiting known vulnerabilities in Internet-connected devices, using widely available tools and techniques
- phishing — and other ways of tricking users into installing or executing a malicious application
- password guessing — manual or automated attempts to log on from the Internet, by guessing passwords

The Brigade applied through a registered accreditation body and received the confirmation of certification on during November 2019.

## **Risk Management Arrangements**

The Authority's risk management arrangements are designed to effectively support service delivery via a balanced strategy of protection, prevention and emergency response

Through the established Risk Management Framework the Service annually undertakes detailed risk assessments, produces intelligence and performance analysis reports to ensure that strategic, tactical and operational decision making and activities are intelligence-led, impact assessed and evaluated.

Employees with specialist skills work in conjunction with operational colleagues and use specialist systems and software to ensure the risk management framework is delivered effectively and to a high standard.

Information and data from a multitude of sources, internal and external to the Brigade, is used when compiling this analysis to ensure a robust and comprehensive picture of the risks facing the Brigade and the Community is established.

The risks facing the Brigade and its communities are refreshed on an annual basis and summarised in our [Community Risk Profile](#), underpinned by a suite of detailed risk assessments so that we have an excellent understanding of who and what is at risk, when and where they are at risk from a variety of hazardous events. This allows us to then utilise this information for both strategic and tactical purposes in the delivery of services.

As detailed in the outcome report from the HMICFRS inspection it assessed the Brigade has a good understanding of local and community risk, which it explains well to the public in its community integrated risk management plan (CIRMP).

Our Corporate Risks are identified and addressed through our [Corporate Risk Register](#) that articulates and quantifies each individual risk. Risks are scored in the context of the likelihood and impact of the risks. Control measures are identified to address the risks and the CRR is reviewed at regular points during the year.

## 5 Performance

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Cleveland Fire Brigade has an integrated performance assessment framework which is reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly and annual basis, for analysis and scrutiny. A suite of corporate indicators and targets are used by the Authority and enable stakeholders to scrutinise delivery of the CIRMP 2018/22.

The performance reports are made publically available and are supplemented with summary performance leaflets for the Brigade and each district. The Brigade's website has a [portal](#) to provide users with up-to-date information on performance of key indicators at a Brigade wide, District and Ward level.

An [Annual Performance and Efficiency Report](#) is produced and presented to Members of the Audit and Governance Committee and the CFA. This report is publically available on the Brigade's website and shared with our key stakeholders.

Details regarding our arrangements in respect of access to data and information can be found on the Brigade's website.

The Brigade aims to make it as easy as possible for the people we serve to let us know their views. Through listening and learning we improve the quality of the services we provide, and encourage and recognise good practice by staff.

The Brigade wants to [hear](#) from people if they:

- Have a suggestion on how we might improve services.
- Would like to compliment us on a job well done.
- Feel we have fallen short of their expectations.
- Feel we have fallen short of the standards we set ourselves in dealing with complaints.

## 7 Assurance Summary

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As Chair of County Cleveland Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer of Cleveland Fire Brigade, we are satisfied that, during 2019/20 our business has been conducted effectively in accordance with proper standards and law and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Additionally, we are satisfied that the Authority has done everything within its power to comply with the requirements of the 2018 Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

In line with the requirements of the National Framework, we can provide assurance to the people of Teesside on the Authority's operational, financial and governance arrangements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

.....  
Ian Hayton  
Chief Fire Officer

.....  
Cllr Paul Kirton  
Chair of Cleveland Fire Authority

Date:



## **Bibliography and Quick Links to Key Documents**

This section provides the list of the key documents and associates links to the documents that have been used in the production of the Annual Statement of Assurance for 2017/18.

[National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services for England](#)

[Guidance on Annual Statement of Assurance](#)

[Community Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018/22](#)

[Service Plan](#)

[Annual Performance and Efficiency Report](#)

[Community Risk Profile](#)

## **Glossary**

ASA: Annual Statement of Assurance

CFA: Cleveland Fire Authority

CIPFA: Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy

CIRMP: Community Integrated Risk Management Plan

HMICFRS: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

HO: Home Office

JESIP: Joint Services Interoperability Principles

LRF: Local Resilience Forum

NR: National Resilience

NRAT: National Resilience Audit Team

NF: National Framework

**Cleveland Fire Authority  
recognises the diverse make-  
up of the area it serves and is  
committed to equality,  
diversity and inclusion.**

If you require this document in an  
alternative language, large print or  
Braille, please do not hesitate to  
contact us.

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আপনার যদি এই নথিটি একটি বকিং  
ভাষা, বড় হরফের মুদ্রন বা ব্রাইল

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Eger tu vê belgeyê bi zimanê  
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ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਮਤਾਵੇਸ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਦਲਵੀਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ, ਵੱਡੇ  
ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ  
ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲਵੋ।

உங்களாக்கா இந்த ஆவணம் ஒரு  
மாற்று மொழியில், பெரிய அச்சு  
அல்லது பிரெயிலில் தலைப்பட்டால்,  
எங்களைத் தொடர்பு கொள்ள  
தயக்க வேண்டாம்.

প্রয়োজন হয়, আমাদের সাথে  
যোগাযোগ করতে দ্বিধা করবেন না।

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Braillově písmu, neváhejte  
nás kontaktovat.

اگر این نوشتار را به زبانی دیگر، یا چاپ  
درشت یا خطبریل لازم دارید، لطفاً با ما تماس  
بگیرید.

Kung nangangailangan ka ng  
dokumentong ito sa isang  
alternatibong wika, malaking

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان، بڑے  
حروف کی چھپائی یا بریل میں درکار ہو تو  
برائے مہربانی بلا جھجک ہم سے رابطہ کریں

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<http://www.clevelandfire.gov>

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