

**Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Statement of assurance on governance arrangements, including risk management and internal control**

Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service (LFRS) 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.

In discharging this overall responsibility, LFRS is responsible 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.

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level.

As the Executive Board, we have responsibility for maintaining a system of sound internal control including risk management that supports the achievement of the Authority's and the Service's objectives, and for reviewing its effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify the principal risks to the achievement of these objectives, to evaluate the nature and extent of those risks and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

However, the system of internal control is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve these objectives; it can therefore provide only reasonable and not absolute confidence that the risks of failure have been mitigated.

As Executive Directors, we are responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements including system of internal control and risk management processes operating within the Service. The review of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements including the system of internal control has taken into account the following:

- The adequacy and effectiveness of management review processes;
- Outcomes from the formal risk assessment and evaluation (the risk register);
- Relevant self-assessments of key service areas within the Service;
- Relevant internal audit reports and the implementation of recommendations made by the Audit Service; and

- Outcomes from reviews by other bodies including external and statutory inspectorates and the external auditors.

We are satisfied that effective governance arrangements are in place, including a sound system of internal control throughout the year ended 31 March 2021 and is on-going, with the following improvements proposed.

- An updated IRMP covering the period 2022/27 will be produced;
- The outcome of the Staff Survey will be published and, where relevant, acted upon;
- A project to replace the existing Performance Management System will commence;
- An upgraded Finance system will be implemented in April 2022.

We propose to take steps to address the matters identified to enhance the adequacy of the Services internal controls. We are satisfied that these steps will enhance the system of internal control and the overall governance arrangements and we will be monitoring their implementation and operation.