

Agenda Item 5
EPFCP/23/23

Report title: Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2022-2023	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Report author: Roger Hirst (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority)	
Date: 28 September 2023	For: Review
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of report

This report provides the Panel with the draft Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2022-2023. The draft report is attached at Annex A.

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel has a statutory duty to review and provide feedback on the draft Statement of Assurance.

2. Recommendation

That Panel members note the draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for 2022 - 2023 and either endorse this version or provide comment on the content.

3. Overview

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions. Every fire and rescue authority must publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the Framework. For PFCCFRAs such as Essex, this statement is subject to scrutiny by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and is called the 'Fire and Rescue Statement of Assurance'.

The statement outlines the way in which the Authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard – in the period covered by the document – to the National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and to any strategic plan prepared by the Authority for that period. In the case of this report, this includes the Fire and Rescue Plan 2019 - 2024.

The Authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters. The preparation of this document therefore follows the development of the Statement of Accounts for the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and includes further information to help our communities understand the work undertaken by the fire and rescue service and its performance during 2022 - 2023. Due to national backlogs in auditing services, the Statement of Accounts has not been audited yet. However, it is highly unlikely that there would be any material change to the core financial position of the service or the narrative section that would impact this annual report.

For the second year, the Panel ran a workshop for members to see an early draft of the document and provide feedback. The table below shows the feedback provided by the Panel and the response from the Authority:

Page number	Comment / suggested change	Comment / action
Double page spread of photos (after cover page)	Add captions to photos	Done
Pages 2 to 4 (now pages 42 – 44)	Move governance section to the end. The flow of the document was discussed, and the Panel felt it would serve the readers / public better to move straight into the Commissioner's and Chief Fire Officer's reports.	Done. Governance section moved. Contents page updated accordingly.
Page 5 Fire and Rescue Statement	Second column, third paragraph erroneously refers to the financial year 2020/21.	Changed to reference 2022/23
Page 5 Fire and Rescue Statement	Add the Commissioner's signature.	This will be added once the report is formally approved, prior to publication
Page 10 – 16 CFO's Report	Move the Chief Fire Officer's Report from 6 pages (3 spreads) to 4 pages (2 spreads).	Could only be achieved by reducing the font size, and this

		would not meet accessibility best practice.
Page 16 CFO report	Update language re “prep for next summer.”	Done
Page 24 People section	Make the People Strategy diagram bigger	Done
Page 40 Finance section	“Publication” – typo	Corrected
Back page	Discussion regarding electric scooters, electric cars etc. Suggested adding a safety message into the document.	Done. Back page advert changed from Firestoppers to e-bike safety. NB: Firestoppers was the advert for the Statement of Assurance / Annual Report 2021-2022, so has received coverage.

The report presented to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel today is a draft, but does already incorporate feedback from the Panel. The Panel can either endorse this version or provide additional feedback. If the Panel provides further feedback, a final version will be shared with the Panel before publication.

4. Appendices

Annex A – Draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2022 - 2023