



WARWICKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service

Annual Statement of Assurance

2020/21

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1. Foreword

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) places a requirement on all Fire and Rescue Authority's (FRAs) to provide assurance to their communities and to government on financial, governance and operational matters. This Statement of Assurance aims to provide the necessary assurance to the people of Warwickshire that we are delivering against these expectations. It covers three main areas:

- making sure our governance arrangements are delivering our services effectively and efficiently,
- ensuring our financial arrangements are in order and providing good value for money, and
- organising our services to make sure risks are well understood and we have the right resources in place to tackle them effectively and safely.

The Statement includes links to relevant documents published on our website and elsewhere, which will help you to further assess our effectiveness.

This statement primarily covers our work in the year to 31st March 2021, but we also comment on our future direction. We hope this statement provides you with the assurance that we are meeting our statutory duties and working to make Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for the future.



Andy Crump
Cabinet Member for Fire & Community Safety



Ben Brook
Chief Fire Officer

2. About Us

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) is a County Council Fire and Rescue service, which discharges fire and rescue functions on behalf of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority (WFRA). The service is also supported by key specialist services which are gathered into WCC Resources Directorate.

- ✚ We have 17 fire stations
- ✚ We have a fleet of 37 response vehicles, of which 23 are fire engines.
- ✚ We employ over 450 people, of which 370 are operational firefighters.
- ✚ Warwickshire is strategically located, covers 1,975 sq. km, and has a population of 577,933.
- ✚ The county has an extensive road network spanning 4,130 km, including 140 km of motorways.
- ✚ Our operational budget for 2020/21 is £21.3m, of which £19m is spent on our staff.

During 2020/21 our total activity undertaken was 18,966 which includes 3,473 incidents attended. The infographic below features some of our statistical highlights over the year. More details about us, our resources, risk and performance can be found on our [Integrated Risk Management 2020-25 page](#).

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS 2020-21

1 8 9 6 6

TOTAL ACTIVITY
undertaken in the Warwickshire
community

Prevention

12,917

60,707 (19/20) ↓



Contacts - 9,910
43,645 (19/20)



Safe and Well
Checks - 1,330
6,208 (19/20)



Road Safety
activities - 362
409 (19/20)



People school
programmes - 1,315
6,326 (19/20)

Protection

1,079

1,818 (19/20) ↓



premises
influenced by
Fire Protection

Response

3,473 incidents
attended

3,843 (19/20) ↓



False Alarms **1,592**

46%

30% Fires **1,048**

16% Special Services **563**

8% RTCs **270** (8%)

30%
of the 1,048 fires
were deliberate

1,230 fires (2019/20) ↓

Hospital to Home

1,497

1,092 (19/20) ↑



Hospital to Home
collections

Emergency calls

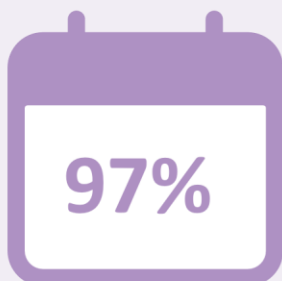
9,784

10,686 (19/20) ↓

Total emergency
calls received
by WFRS



Availability



The average
wholtime appliance
availability was 97.4%
for 2020/21



Between November 2020
to March 2021 the
average on-call
availability was 71%



Response time

Average time taken to respond
to a life risk incident for the
first attending appliance*

8 mins
32 secs

Fire incidents

9 mins
47 secs

Road Traffic
Collisions

8 mins
25 secs

Special Service
incidents



Casualties

23 fire related injuries

22 (19/20) ↑

1 fire related death

3 (19/20) ↓



Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)

Attended
104 ADFs

86%

confined to
room of origin



104

161 (19/20) ↓

Emergency calls

87% of life risk and
property emergency
calls handled within
90 seconds



*WFRS have a target to respond to 75% of calls within 10 minutes. This target was not met in the 2020/21 financial year when 66.34% of appliances arrived at life risk or property incidents within the 10 minute target.

OFFICIAL - Sensitive

Data sources: Firecrest, Fire Service Rota, Vision, WFRS Prevention Team & WFRS Performance Tracker. Report produced by the Business Intelligence Team.

3. Governance

Governance is about how we ensure we do the right things, in the right way, at the right time to deliver our priorities. It is made up of all the systems, processes, culture, and behaviours which direct and control the way in which we work. It demonstrates how we engage with our communities and our accountability to them.

The Service's overall governing body is WFRA. The Authority makes sure the Service carries out its statutory duties as set out in the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#), and the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#).

The Authority sets the budget and approves the overall direction for the Service. It also appoints the Chief Fire Officer and makes sure the Service has the right resources to deliver our services effectively and efficiently in the best interests of the communities of Warwickshire.

The WFRA has a responsibility to ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is used efficiently and effectively and properly accounted for. This is detailed within the [Code of Corporate Governance](#) which is aligned to the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016).

The Governance Framework comprises the Governance principles, systems, processes, culture, and values by which the Council is directed, controlled and through which it is accountable to and engages with the communities of Warwickshire.

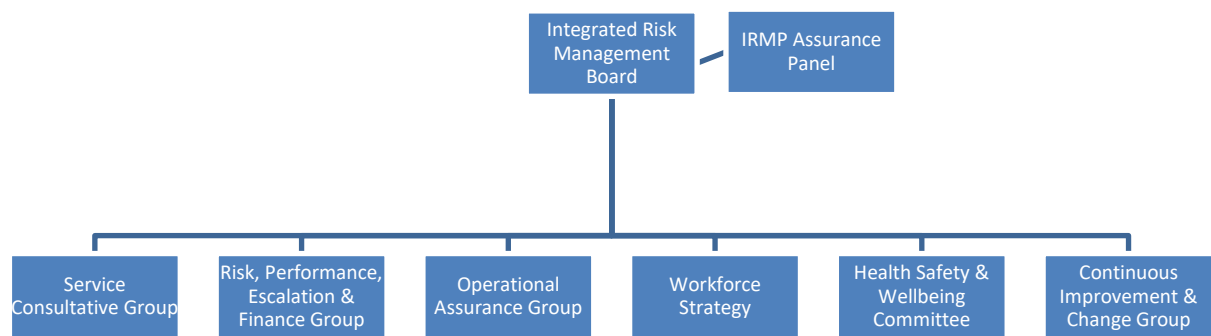
The framework allows us to monitor how we are achieving our strategic aims and ambitions, and to consider whether they have helped us deliver appropriate services that demonstrate value for money. To review the effectiveness of the code, the Council has the following arrangements in place:

Figure 1. Warwickshire County Council Governance Framework



Underpinning the Council’s governance framework is our service governance framework. This provides a structure for the service to review the effectiveness of our IRMP, and progress against the delivery of our IRMP Action Plan.

Figure 2: Oversight of WFRS Governance Framework

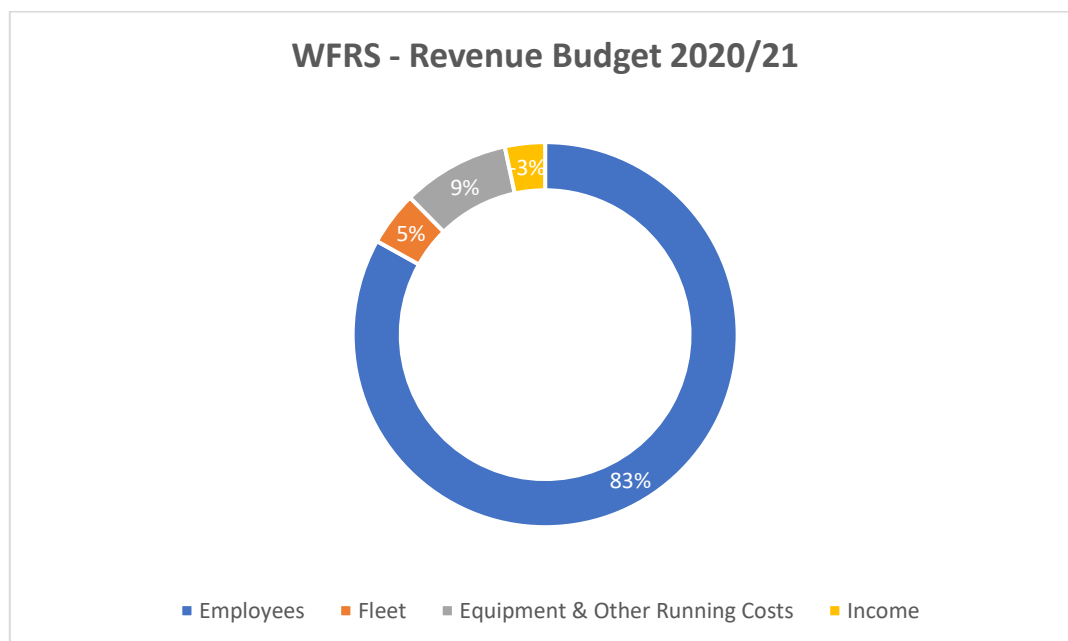


Each year the Authority prepares an [Annual Governance Statement \(AGS\)](#) this is contained within the Annual Statement of Accounts. The Statement provides an overall assessment of the Councils Corporate Governance arrangements and its adherence to the Governance standards and principles. Evidence to support the assessment is gathered, reviewed, and analysed to assess the robustness of the governance arrangements.

4. Finance

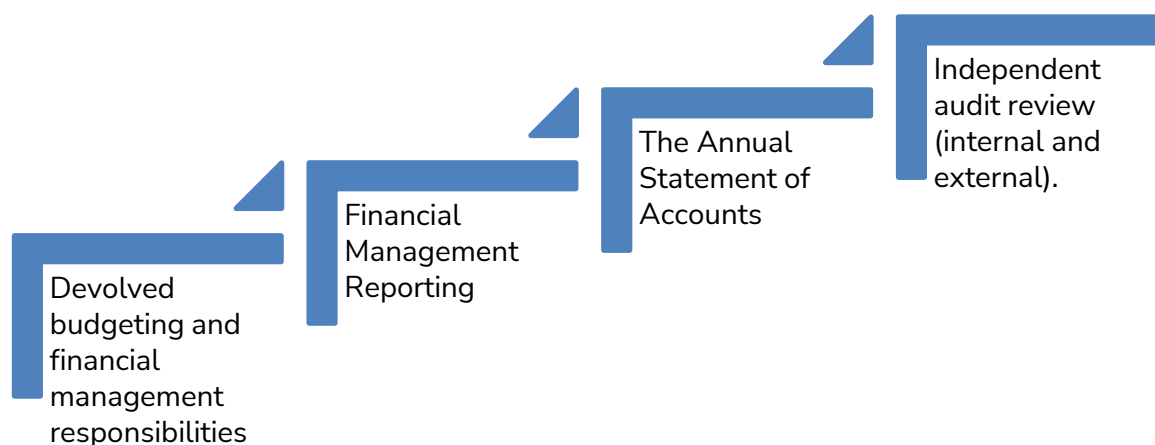
The Service operates within the [WCC Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) and The Authority approves a medium-term financial plan each year. This sets out the resources needed to deliver our services and agrees an annual budget. The revenue budget for 2020/21 is £21.3m as shown in the chart below.

Figure 3. 2020/21 Revenue Budget



Every year we follow a structured financial assurance programme to ensure that our financial management arrangements meet the highest standards. This assurance is provided through the following framework.

Figure 4: Financial Assurance Framework



We operate **Devolved Budgeting** as we believe those who are closest to the point of service delivery are best placed to make informed financial decisions. Budget Managers are required to review their financial position regularly and prepare a monthly forecast. To ensure those with financial responsibilities are equipped with the right skills and

knowledge to carry out their responsibilities, the service is supported by the local finance team and accompanying guidance and information is provided on the [Finance & Commercial](#) intranet page.

Financial Management reports are produced on a regular basis and presented to the Fire Leadership Team, the Directorate Leadership Team, and quarterly reports are also presented to Cabinet. This process offers a route for escalation, ensures scrutiny, and provides the necessary information to enable informed decision making.

The Annual Statement of Accounts is produced in line with the accounting codes of practice, it is scrutinised by independent governance, audit, and scrutiny committee, approved by WCC, and currently audited by Grant Thornton UK LLP. This provides an independent assessment of the Fire Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Independent review and audit provide further assurance. A programme of audits is carried out by WCC Internal Audit Services annually. This programme of works will vary year upon year depending on the nature and severity of risk. In 2017 the HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service, this inspection also provides an assessment of our efficiency, effectiveness, and people.

5. Organisational Assurance

FRA's operate within a clearly defined statutory framework and there are key legislative documents defining these responsibilities.

Statutory	Purpose
Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004	Sets out the responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Authorities. There are 4 key responsibilities that we must make provision for. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extinguishing fires in our area• protecting life and property in the event of fires in our area• rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision, and• rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies.
Civil Contingencies Act 2004	Provides a clear framework that sets out the roles and responsibilities of organisations with a role to play in preparing for and responding to emergencies in the UK. Fire & Rescue Authorities are a Category 1 responder under the Act.
Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order 2005	The Order is designed to provide a minimum fire safety standard in non-domestic premises. Any person who exercises some level of control for premises (the 'responsible person') needs to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and ensure that people can escape safely if a fire does occur.
Fire and Rescue National Framework for England	The national framework sets out the government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. The government has a duty to produce the framework and keep it current. Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the framework in carrying out their duties.
Integrated Risk Management Plan	The IRMP identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our community, looks at the resources we have in place and the activity we need to undertake to meet these risks and improve safety.
Local Resilience Forum	A requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on communities.

In summary these statutory requirements set out the FRA's responsibilities for.

- Provision of fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.
- Emergency preparedness and multi-agency response.
- Fire safety advice and law enforcement.
- Assessment and management of risk
- Accountability

Integrated Risk Management Planning Process

Making sure our firefighters and communities are kept as safe as possible is at the heart of everything we do. We constantly assess the level of risk across the county and each year we follow our Integrated Risk Management Planning Process. This process is integral to our organisational assurance and ensures that we understand risk within Warwickshire. This process drives the assessment of our risk, the delivery of our services, evaluation of our outcomes and provides our organisational assurance.

5. WFRS Integrated Risk Management Planning Process



We continually monitor and review our risk profile and any changes in risk, and associated control measures are captured within our risk register. The Service Risk Register is managed by Risk Owners and where necessary, risks can be escalated to the Integrated Risk Management Board and further escalated onto the Strategic Risk Register (SRR). The SRR is reviewed quarterly at WCC Corporate Board and Cabinet and is reported annually to the Audit and Standards Committee.

Our [Business Plan 2020/21](#) has a set of key performance measures, these enable us to assess our performance against our key actions. These measures are reviewed on a regular basis and reported initially through our Risk, Performance, Escalation and Finance Group and then by exception to the IRMB.

Due to the COVID19 Pandemic the Service extended the 2019/20 IRMP Action Plan and continued to deliver against this plan during 2020/21. Alongside this, work also began on developing our IRMP 2020-25. After a 12-week public consultation process the IRMP was agreed by The Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2021. More information on our IRMP 2020-25 and the consultation process can be viewed on our [website](#).

Independent Assurance

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

In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service and we are now assessed on efficiency, effectiveness, and people. Our first inspection was carried out during July 2018 and we were graded as good in two out of the three areas.

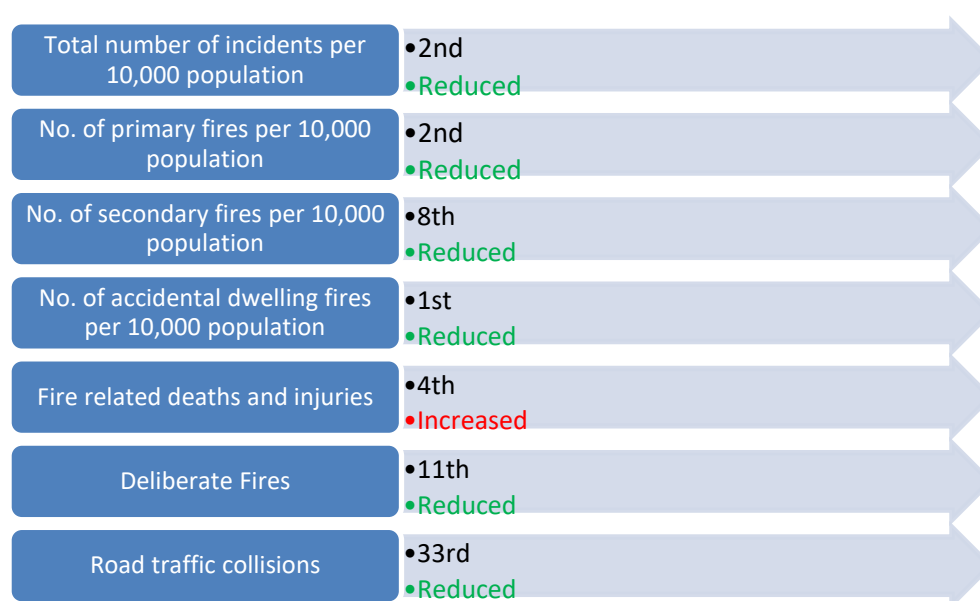
A second inspection by HMICFRS was planned for March 2020 however due to the Covid-19 pandemic this inspection was postponed. Instead, the Home Office commissioned HMICFRS to inspect how FRA's were responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Findings from our inspection are contained with the [COVID-19 Inspection Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service](#).

Our Performance During 2020/21

Our year end is concluded with a look back over the year and our Operational Performance Report 2020-21 is reported to The Resources & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This report includes a comparison, to other UK Fire and Rescue Service's and to our previous year activity.

Positively, Warwickshire has improved its ranking for 6 of the 8 key incident categories in comparison to the other 44 English Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs). It has remained best performing FRS in relation to the rate per 10,000 population (ranks 1st) for Accidental Dwelling Fires in 2020/21. Listed below is our performance against some of our key incident categories.

2020/21 Statistical Performance – Rank compared to UK FRS's and comparison to 2019/20



6. Conclusion

2020/21 presented challenges as we continued to work through the pandemic. Particularly the impact on our communities and our workforce, and the bearing this had on the availability of our resources and delivery of services. This was managed through our business continuity arrangements and flexible resource management. We remained ready to respond to all emergencies and continued to provide preventative activities using alternative methods.

The pandemic also presented us with some opportunities as we were able to realign and upskill staff to support some of the most vulnerable people within Warwickshire. We were at the forefront of supporting WCC in the development and running of the COVID-19 Targeted Testing facilities within Warwickshire. We were also able to support with community activities including, food parcel and medicine deliveries, and safe and well telephone calls to some of the most vulnerable and isolated people within Warwickshire.

We welcome any views you may have on the content of this Statement of Assurance. If you have any comments or would like to contact us about any issue, please visit our [website](#) where you will find full contact details along with links to further information about our services and activities.

Signed

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Andy Crump
Cabinet Member
for Fire and Community Safety

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Ben Brook
Chief Fire Officer