



**Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority**

**Decision Report**

**Please ensure all sections below are completed**

**Report reference number:** 057-22

**Government security classification** Not protectively marked

**Title of report:** Essex County Fire and Rescue – Assurance Strategy

**Area of county / stakeholders affected:** Service wide

**Report by :** James Taylor

**Date of report:** 15.11.2022

**Enquiries to:** james.taylor@essex-fire.gov.uk

**1. Purpose of the report**

To gain the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (PFCC) approval of the publication of the Assurance Strategy.

**2. Recommendations**

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner approve for publication the final version of the Assurance Strategy.

**3. Benefits of the proposal**

The Assurance Strategy sets the strategic direction for implementing and embedding Assurance across the Service, and explains clearly what our staff, volunteers, public and other stakeholders can expect from us.

It outlines our principles, the three lines of defence methodology, and the expectancy moving forward. It clearly identifies the reasons why Assurance is needed and whose responsibility it is within the Service at all levels and delivers against both the Fire and Rescue Plan objectives, and our Service priorities.

In the context of the Service, the term assurance is used to mean the ways that we can ensure that the service delivered to our communities and partners, and internally, are effective and efficient, are legislatively compliant and deliver improved outcomes. The Service will have an overall framework of controls that provides a verifiable evidence base of compliance that will develop standards, embed learning and provide assurance.

#### **4. Background and proposal**

Assurance should be integral for any public sector organisation that operates with transparency and accountability. For the Service, the methodology and principles that create our assurance framework enables us to demonstrate risk based, effective, efficient, and financially stable delivery of the Service's activities to maximise public safety outcomes within communities.

Whilst assurance itself does not deliver outcomes; effective assurance is a critical component of good governance. Good governance helps to build trust and confidence in internal and community-based service delivery. High-quality assurance information enables better conversations about risks to successful delivery and helps the Service to focus on actions that will 'make the difference' – either by identifying areas for improvement or good practice to disseminate across the Service.

This is a new Strategy and has been developed to overarch the Assurance Framework and associated delivery plan. The Assurance Strategy supports the Service's compliance with its obligations under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The performance and assurance activities across the Service will require a high level of organisational change but they will go beyond the requirements of the National Framework and align with good practice principles outlined by other organisations, such as those identified by HMICFRS, the National Fire Chiefs Council, HM Treasury, Local Government Association, and the National Audit Office.

#### **5. Alternative options considered and rejected**

A strategy on a page was considered but felt at this time the strategy should be more in-depth to support a greater understanding of assurance and why it is required. A strategy on a page will be developed once the content is approved to support the promotion of the Strategy. The document will be designed in line with our brand style guide.

#### **6. Strategic priorities**

This strategy helps deliver against the Service and PFCC strategic objectives.

#### **7. Operational implications**

The implementation of this report has no direct operational implications.

#### **8. Financial implications**

This decision has no direct financial implications.

#### **9. Legal implications**

The decision will ensure the PFCC FRA complies with their legal obligations as set out above including the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018.

#### **10. Staffing implications**

The content of this strategy has no direct staffing implications.

## 11. Equality and Diversity implications

We have considered whether individuals with protected characteristics will be disadvantaged as a consequence of the actions being taken. Due regard has also been given to whether there is impact on people who identify as being part of each of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

Race	No	Religion or belief	No
Sex	No	Gender reassignment	No
Age	No	Pregnancy & maternity	No
Disability	No	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Sexual orientation	No		

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper.

## 12. Risks

There are no risks associated with this decision.

## 13. Governance Boards

The Strategy was presented and discussed at ECFRS SLT on the 1 November 2022, the Continuous Improvement Board on 8 November 2022 and the Strategic Board on 7 December 2022.

## 14. Background papers


Appendix A – Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Assurance Strategy

**Decision Process (057)**

**Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments**

(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

.....I support this recommendation.....

Sign: .....  ..... Date:.....7/12/22.....

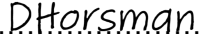
**Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies**

(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

There is no requirement to consult with the Rep bodies as this is a statutory requirement, however the document has been shared with the four representative bodies.

**Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review**

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority’s (“the Commissioner’s”) Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.

Monitoring Officer Sign: .....  .....  
Print: Darren Horsman - Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Date: 10/1/2023 . . . . .

Chief Finance Officer Sign: .....  .....  
Print: .....Neil Cross...  
Date: . . . 7/12/22 . . . . .

**Step 3 - Publication**

Is the report for publication?      **YES**

**If ‘NO’, please give reasons for non-publication** (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State ‘none’ if applicable)

.....

If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

**Step 4 - Redaction**

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

- 1 Of Decision Sheet NO
- 2 Of Appendix NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

.....

Date redaction carried out: .....

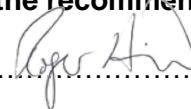
If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: ..... Print: .....

Date signed: .....

**Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign:  ..... (PFCC / ~~DPFCC~~)

Print: ..ROGER.HIRST..... Date signed: 12 January 2023 .....

I do not agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: ..... (PFCC / DPFCC)

Print: ..... Date signed: .....