



**Cumbria Fire
Authority**

**Statement of
Assurance
2018/19**



Introduction

Welcome to Cumbria Fire Authority's Statement of Assurance for 2018/19. As the Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and Fire and Rescue, I am pleased to present this statement for our local communities, setting out how the Service meets the requirements of The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

This document explains how the Fire Authority and the Fire Service deliver on financial, governance and operational matters, it gives reassurance that these areas are being addressed appropriately and outlines how the Service has performed in the financial year 2018/19. The Authority ensures that the proactive approach, focussed on prevention activities, taken by the Service contributes towards Cumbria being a safe place to live, work and visit, and is confident that this approach works to protect some of the most vulnerable in society.

Working collaboratively with partners is a priority for the Authority, this, along with a targeted approach to risk, ensures that we continue to work towards the health, safety and wellbeing of our communities.



Councillor Janet Willis
Cabinet Member for Customers,
Transformation and Fire and
Rescue

The Statement of Assurance

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 sets out the requirement for all fire and rescue authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and to show how they have due regard to the requirements included in the Framework and the expectations set out in the authority's own Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

To demonstrate this, the Framework requires that each authority publish an annual statement of assurance. This statement outlines the way in which the Fire Authority and its Fire and Rescue Service, has due regard to the National Framework, the IRMP and to any other relevant strategic plan prepared by the Authority for that period.



Governance

Cumbria County Council (CCC) fulfils the role of the Fire and Rescue Authority for the county as prescribed under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. They have a statutory duty to provide a fire and rescue service for Cumbria with responsibilities that include:

- Setting the overarching Corporate Strategy;
- Making key decisions where:
 - I. Significant change or impact will affect two or more communities or wards;
 - II. Expenditure or savings exceeding £500,000 are concerned;
- Oversight, challenge, evaluation and reporting in respect of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) business decisions and activities;
- Internal audit of CFRS activities to ensure, among other things, the correctness of all income and expenditure and;
- Provision of an Annual Governance Statement as set out in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended 2016).

The Fire and Rescue Service is within the Customers, Transformation and Fire and Rescue portfolio held by Councillor Janet Willis. The role of the Portfolio Holder is to oversee the work of your fire and rescue service, supporting the council's Cabinet and Council in making key decisions about policies and services that matter to local people.

The performance of the Fire and Rescue Service is overseen by the Communities and Place Scrutiny Committee, Members' Performance Working Group and Audit and Assurance Committee.

Details of how you can attend meetings, access agendas and reports and view decisions are available on the County Council website.

Cumbria Fire Authority (Full Council)

The Fire Authority in Cumbria is the Full Council consisting of all 84 Members. A key part of their function is to approve the Policy Framework which includes the IRMP. They also approve the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which includes CFRS.



Cabinet

It is the responsibility of the Cabinet to implement the Budget and Policy Framework once it has been formally approved by Council. Cabinet receive quarterly performance reports against the Council Plan (see below) and budget monitoring reports against the MTFP.

In 2018/19 Cabinet considered:

- Statement of Assurance 2017/18
- Draft IRMP 2019-23 and permission to consult
- Final proposed IRMP 2019-23 for recommendation to Full Council

Cabinet also consider strategies and policies, such as the Council's Workforce Plan, which encompasses CFRS.

The Chief Fire Officer is appointed by the Fire Authority and forms an integral part of the Corporate Management Team within CCC.

Under the 'Scheme of Delegations' (contained within CCC Constitution), the Chief Fire Officer has the full range of powers to discharge the Council's functions in relation to its Fire and Rescue Service and can also make decisions concerning:

- Resilience and Emergency Planning
- Any other services allocated or re-allocated to the Chief Fire Officer by the Chief Executive

Statutory Responsibilities

Fire and Rescue Authorities function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework as contained in the key legislation and guidance outlined below:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order
- Fire and Rescue Service National Framework
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005



Equality

CFRS is committed to ensuring it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty providing equality of opportunity through access to services for all and by:

- Delivering services which meet the needs of our communities;
- Fostering good relations by understanding the communities the service protects;
- Delivering meaningful engagement;
- Eliminating discrimination through the service’s operational and workplace policies and procedures.

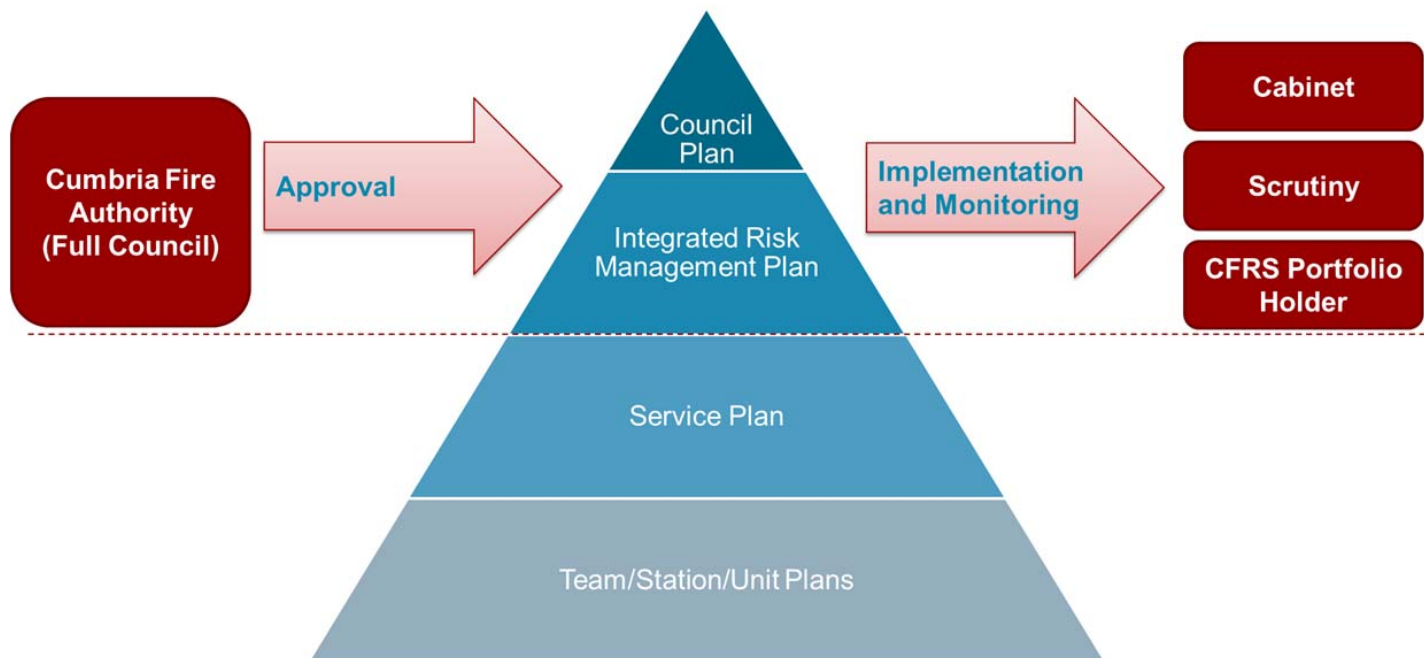
To support the delivery of our Equality Duty, CFRS will build on its existing approach and publish an Equality Action Plan which will set out the objectives and related activities which will be undertaken to meet our commitments. This approach will enhance visibility and accountability.

Council Plan 2018 - 2022

The Council’s four year Plan sets out the outcomes the Council wants to achieve for the people of Cumbria, and the approaches it will use to contribute to achieving these outcomes.

The Plan is supported by an annual Delivery Plan which describes the key activities undertaken to deliver the outcomes. The Delivery Plan for 2018/19 was agreed by cabinet in May 2018 and included actions and measures related to CFRS and is available on the council’s website.

Diagram: Showing how CFRS strategy and plans align to the strategic intent of the CCC plan



Transparency

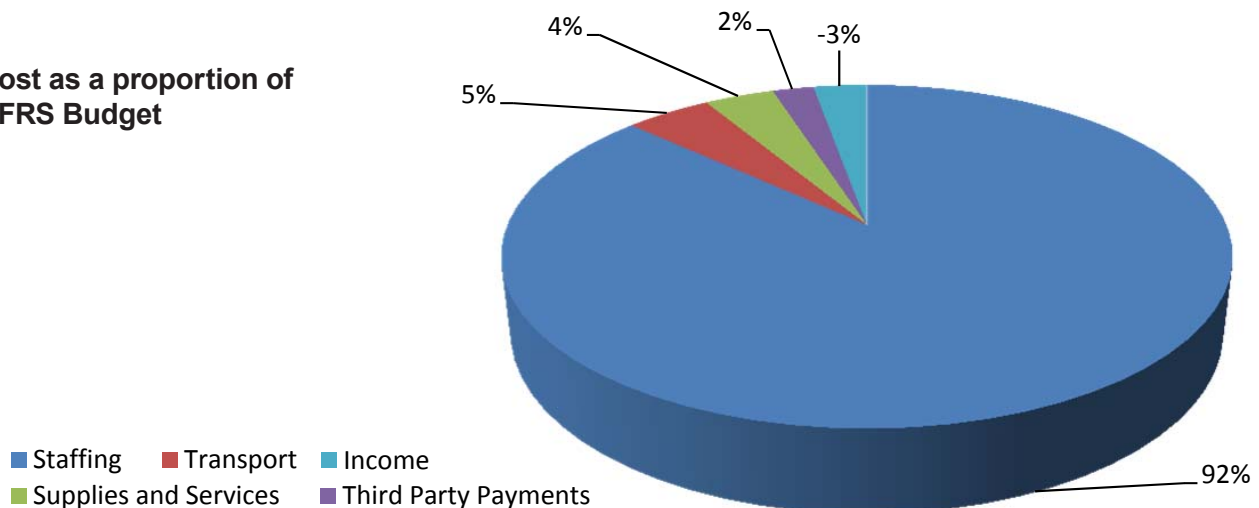
CFRS is open and transparent and ensures performance data is routinely made available on its website for any stakeholders, including communities, to scrutinise. This includes data to individual station level and fire engine availability and response times.

This can all be accessed at www.cumbria.gov.uk/cumbriafire/performance-and-transparency/performance-and-transparency.asp

Finance

The Fire and Rescue Service budget is primarily aligned to staffing, transport and supplies and services, as shown in the graph below. In 2018/19 CFRS annual net revenue budget was £15.616 million, excluding capital depreciation. There is also an additional capital budget to procure fleet vehicles, equipment and improve infrastructure.

Cost as a proportion of CFRS Budget



The -3% shown in the pie chart represents Income we receive that supplements our core budget.

CCC is responsible for ensuring that public affairs are conducted in accordance with the law and public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

A 'Statement of Accounts' is produced and published annually on the Council's website which contains headline financial information. The accounts can be accessed on the **County Council website**.

The Annual Governance Statement sets out the main features of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and its effectiveness. This Governance Statement can also be found at the link above.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The IRMP reflects the service's risk profile and considers key areas of risk and demand across the county.

This process enables the Service to be clear about the levels of risk that exist, influencing prevention, protection and response arrangements. The supporting Action Plan for 2018/19 identified opportunities for change to ensure fire and rescue resources continue to be strategically aligned in accordance with risk and demand.

[Link to CFRS 2018 - 19 IRMP Action Plan](#)



Operational debriefs / Assurance

Operational debriefs are used by CFRS as part of the quality control system concerned with its core activities. These debriefs provide valuable lessons learned which contribute to improving the services provided. They are undertaken at a level which recognises the scale of the incident and also the involvement of other partner agencies.

Operational Assurance is used to support workforce learning and identifies training needs, and examples of best practice, through Active Incident Monitoring (AIM) processes. This work includes reporting through the national sector learning portals; Joint Operational Learning (JOL) and the National Operational Learning (NOL).

Operational Training

The CFRS People Strategy informs the development of its workforce. The annual Workforce Development Plan identifies and predicts the required skills and capabilities in line with appraisals, training needs analysis and workforce planning predictions.

The Service has established training plans underpinned by Maintenance of Skills (MOS) and Maintenance of Knowledge (MOK) programmes.

Business Continuity – Civil Contingencies Act 2004

CFRS has robust business continuity plans in place. In addition the Council's Resilience Unit is within the Fire and Rescue Service and work in close collaboration with fire officers. The Chief Fire Officer has provided a business continuity assurance statement at the end of this annual Assurance report.

Regulation 28 of the Coroners (Inquests) Regulations 2013 (formerly known as Rule 43)

The Coroner has a legal power and duty to write a report following an Inquest if it appears there is a risk of other deaths occurring in similar circumstances. This is known as a 'report under regulation 28' or a Preventing Future Deaths report.

In accordance with its commitment to ensure a safe and competent workforce, the Service uses learning from Regulation 28 letters as a result of Inquests. These are used to inform policy, procedural reviews and to advise on any improvement to operational equipment where necessary.

Interoperability, Resilience and Safety

A comprehensive range of risk intelligence data and information is taken into account as part of the risk identification and analysis process underpinning the IRMP. This includes Community Risk Registers, with the Service having a leading role in the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum (CLRF) which focuses on interoperability and joint planning with other emergency services, using the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).

Over the Border Mutual Aid Arrangements

Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allow mutual arrangements to be agreed with neighbouring services to improve resilience and capacity in border areas. Cumbria Fire Authority has in place contractual agreements with the following bordering Fire Authorities for response to operational incidents:

- Scotland
- North Yorkshire
- Durham and Darlington
- Lancashire
- Northumberland



National arrangements

The National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) contains a range of designated roles that provide levels of advice and coordination when National Resilience capabilities are required.

National Resilience, in the context of the Fire and Rescue Service, is the capacity and capability of services to work together with other Category 1 and 2 responders (Civil Contingencies Act 2004) to deliver a sustained and effective response to major incidents, emergencies and disruptive events.

CFRS ensures its emergency preparedness and response capability is tried and tested through regular training and exercising on a local, regional and national scale.

Blue Light Partners

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a statutory duty on blue light services to collaborate where there are real opportunities to improve efficiency, effectiveness and improve public safety. The Service has embraced this concept, and has been instrumental in the establishment of a Blue Light Executive Leaders Board. Several collaboration projects have been implemented in 2018/19, including the introduction of Joint Incident Command Units and the piloting of Joint Emergency Services Officer roles.

Health and Safety

The Authority complies with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant legislation in managing its health and safety (H&S) duties. 2018/19 saw an increase in dedicated capacity within the Authority to focus on the management of the Service's Health, Safety and wellbeing function.

There is a clear commitment from the Authority that elected members, officers and trade union representative's work together to improve standards. Within this collaborative approach the Service is well represented and works to deliver the Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan under the direction of the Assistant Director Organisational Change. The Service has also actively supported the Council in the delivery of a fire safety risk assessment programme.

There are clearly defined management responsibilities and as far as reasonably practicable the Service assess and manages the risks arising from its activities. The Service consults its employees on matters affecting Health and Safety, providing training and information to all employees.

CCC Occupational Health Team support the health and wellbeing of firefighters and officers. The service has a programme of health and wellbeing campaigns and has developed a cohort of mental health trainers, thereby providing all staff with access to support for physical and mental wellbeing.

In addition, the Service has systems in place to support the reporting and investigation of all accidents and near misses, to help limit the potential for recurrence and creating a safe environment.

Link to Authority Health and Safety documents

Community Risk Management

CFRS utilises risk and demand information to ensure that strategic, tactical and operational activities are intelligence-led and research driven. This is achieved by using specialist systems, software, data and skills delivered through professional analysts as well as sharing data with partners. This approach supports the Service's intelligence lead Prevention Strategy and ensures that the Service prioritises its resource to the most vulnerable within the communities of Cumbria and actively supports the wider health agenda. In 2018/19 CFRS delivered over 10,000 Safe and Well visits across the county.

In addition CFRS continues to run and participate in a number of targeted initiatives designed to prevent fires, reduce anti-social behaviour and improve life chances. These included working with Young Firefighters, Fire Cadets, and Junior Citizens.

Fire Protection Activities

CFRS operates a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) for non-domestic premises. The inspection programme is carried out by qualified fire-safety inspectors establishing compliance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This approach is enhanced through the use of firefighters to carry out inspections of low risk premises.

CFRS support businesses to achieve compliance with fire safety legislation providing additional support and guidance to businesses to improve engagement, regulation, and enforcement to support economic development and growth. However, at times CFRS need to enforce the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat.

Fire Investigation

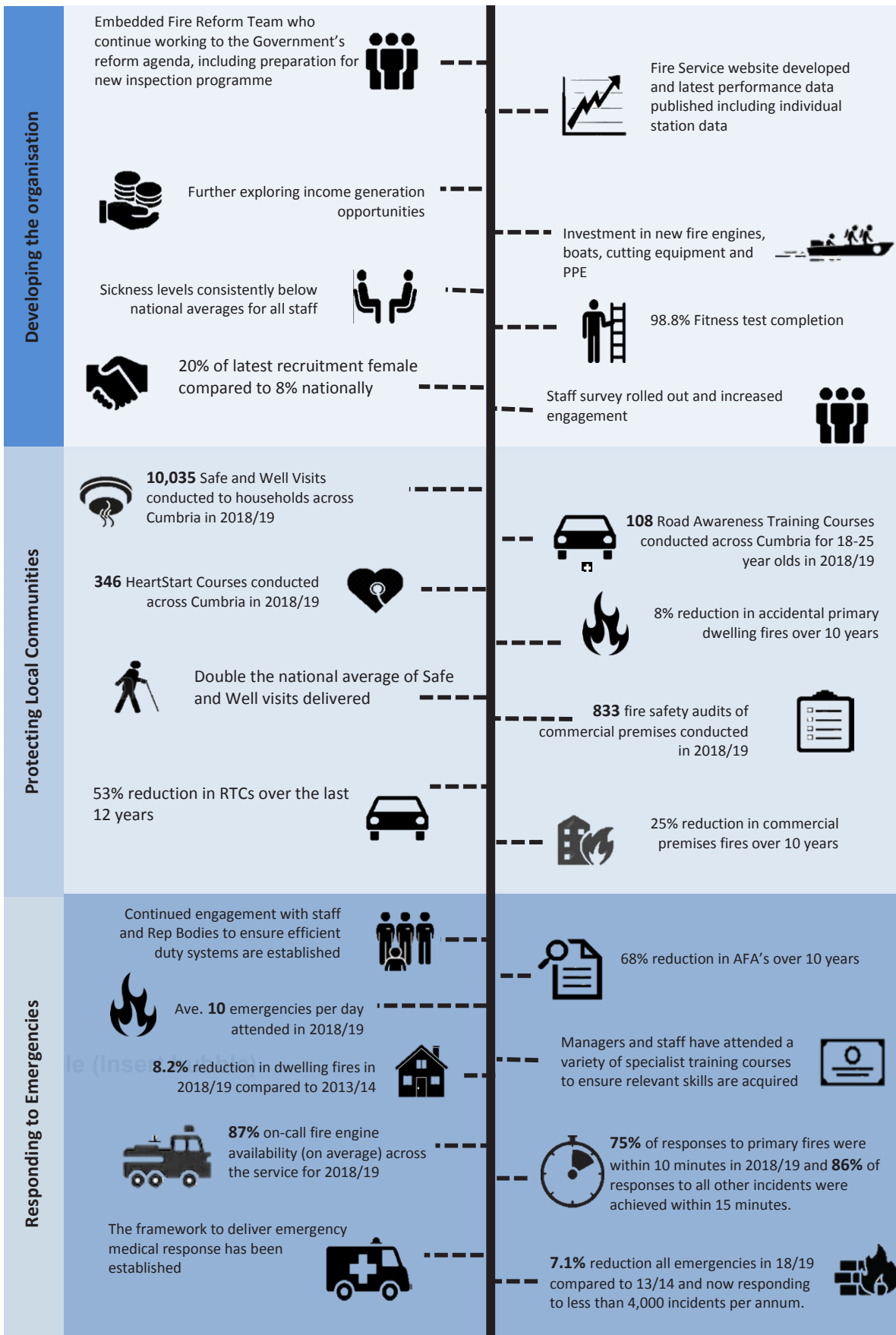
Fire investigation is an integral part of the Service's prevention and protection activities. The main purpose of fire investigation is to determine the origin, cause and development of a fire and to contribute to organisational learning.

Investigation outcomes inform future prevention and protection activities and also assist in the prevention and detection of crime.



Performance against Priority areas

This section highlights CFRS performance during 2018/19 against identified priority areas



Appendix - Business Continuity Arrangements

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 place a legal duty for all Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to write and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the Authority is able to continue its core functions.

Nationally the Fire and Rescue Service is undergoing a prolonged and sustained period of change. The change agenda has several drivers, such as central government policy, increased inter-service collaboration, development of common policies and procedures, innovative local IRMPs, as well as responses to the wider financial climate, public spending cuts and the drive for effectiveness and business efficiencies. Coupled to this are other ongoing threats across the UK, particularly from terrorism, extreme weather and other unforeseen events.

CFRS recognise that during any period of change there is also an increased potential of staff groups taking lawful industrial action to try to influence the pace or direction of the change process.

CFRS work hard to ensure good industrial relations with all staff groups and trade unions. The organisation's intent would be to always try to resolve any issue through local dialogue and by being as inclusive as possible. The intent would be to avoid industrial action. Our aim is for staff, elected members and trade union representatives from all areas of the organisation to be party to the development of organisational priorities, objectives and plans so as to protect the public, minimise staff uncertainty and potential for industrial unrest.

Having effective Business Continuity Management Systems (BCMS) is an important part of the Authority's strategy and a robust programme is well established. Business continuity plans are maintained and tested, with the plans being owned by the CFRS Service Leadership Team.

BCMS within CFRS consist of a number of plans and processes which identify risk and develop resilience across the service. These are developed, regularly reviewed and exercised to ensure that adverse events cause minimal disruption to the services provided and that critical services are maintained.

Examples of BC plans in place:

- Withdrawal of Labour Plan;
- Fuel Shortage Plan;
- Pandemic Flu Plan;
- Departmental BC Plans.

During 2014/15 there were a number of national strikes called by the Fire Brigades Union; therefore the Withdrawal of Labour Plan has undergone 'live testing'. Critical Incident Team meetings have been carried out prior to, and after the strikes to plan, prepare and capture any lessons learned.

During 2018 CFRS exercised the Pandemic Flu Plan during a 7 week long multi-agency exercise. These incidents and exercises continually inform on the robustness of Business Continuity plans in place within CFRS.

In summary

It is a requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 that Fire and Rescue Services have appropriate business continuity arrangements in place, so that a required level of response can be maintained at all times. The Cumbria County Council Business Continuity Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Council has proportionate business continuity arrangements in place and the Corporate Management Team is updated concerning the state of emergency preparedness and business continuity planning across the organisation.

The Business Continuity plans are comprehensive, robust and tested to ensure they are current and fit for purpose.

The BCMS and associated plans were audited during autumn 2018, by the council's internal audit team. The Audit graded CFRS as reasonable i.e. there is a reasonable system of internal control in place which should ensure that system objectives are generally achieved. CFRS is utilising the full report to strengthen business continuity arrangements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Healey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steve Healey
Chief Fire Officer

Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone **01768 812612**.

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